



# Temporary Learning Material

## **Asian Parliamentary Format**

### **Teams:**

There are two opposing teams in an Asian format of debate:

1. Government side- proposes and defends the motion;
2. Opposition side- refutes and negates the motion. Each side is composed of three members.

### **The Members of the government side are the following:**

1. Prime minister (PM)- opens the debate, defines the motion and advances arguments;
2. Deputy prime Minister (DPM)- refute at first instance the case of the opposition, re-establish the government's claim, and advances arguments;
3. Government whip (GW)- makes an issue-based rebuttal of the opposition's case and summarizes the case of the government.

### **The Members of the Opposition side are the following:**

1. Leader of the Opposition (LO) - responds directly to the case of the government by giving a direct clash, and advances arguments. May challenge the motion if the definition is challengeable;
2. Deputy Leader of the Opposition (DPL) - refutes the case of the DPM, re-establishes the case of the opposition, and advances an argument;
3. Opposition Whip (OW) - makes an issues-based rebuttal of the government and summarizes the case of the opposition.

### **Reply Speech:**

Reply speech is a comparative analysis of the strength and weaknesses of the case of both sides. The aim of the speech is to give a biased judgment as to why people should support the team's claim. The speech is first delivered by the opposition side and followed by the government side that will close the debate.

### **Time of Speeches:**

Each speaker is allocated seven minutes to deliver their constructive speeches. One speaker from each side (For the Government: PM/DPM, for Opposition: LO/DLO) is given four minutes to deliver a reply speech. The speakers will be speaking in the following order:

1. Prime Minister (7 min)
2. Leader of the opposition (7 min)
3. Deputy Prime Minister (7 min)
4. Deputy Leader of the Opposition (7 min)
5. Government Whip (7 min)
6. Opposition Whip (7 min)
7. Opposition Reply (4 min)
8. Government Reply (4 min)

### **POI:**

During the constructive speeches, Point of Information (POI) may be raised by the opposing side after the first minute up to the sixth minute. POI may be refused or accepted by the speaker. During reply speeches, no POI may be raised.

#### **A. Basics**

- Give them, be consistently visible.



- Take them and actually answer them.
- Wait 15 secs between offerings - along the bench, and not just the last time you offered.
- Not a conversation - don't reply to their response to your POI. Wait until your own

speech.

#### B. Strategic overview

- Introduce or reintroduce information about your case that conflicts with the speaker's case 'We already told you in PM that X wasn't an issue because it was accounted for by Y'.
- Expose a flaw in their logic / a problematic extension of their logic 'So, would you also support X or where does your enthusiasm for Y stop', 'So this is a regrets motion – it this point is true why hasn't it happened yet' 'this is in contention with what your extension speaker said' 'this is in contention with what OO said, because...'
- Attempt to force them into a corner / a binary they don't want to be in e.g. 'either there is no effect from your policy, in which case you don't get your benefits, or there is an effect from your policy, in which case you have to deal with X worse backlash/outcome'

#### C. Common pitfalls and how to avoid them

##### **Giving:**

- Long POIs: you are reading from a sheet, so your natural cadence is off, judges strain to remember all the things you said, speaker responds to the last thing you said, and for the duration of your POI is thinking of the answer. It's rarely as effective as people think it is.
- Multipart POIs: Speaker responds to the last thing you said. Choose one to make sure you get an answer that you can actually work with.
- Rambling POIs: Sounds lame, doesn't advance your case. Think of POIs in prep time.
- POIs that are too abstract: Judges can't understand the link. Especially bad if you have already spoken and so can't clarify what you meant. A wasted POI.
- Yes/no POIs: there is usually an obvious answer to these. Ask a POI that demands a more structured answer; the speaker is more likely to trip themselves up.
- Timing: Do not give POIs during the speech immediately before yours. If you do, prepare for the speaker to let you stand for a bit and waste your time. Let your partner give them.

##### **Receiving:**

- Think strategically about the team you're taking a POI from, and ask for a POI from the team you want the POI from if you need to.
- Timing: Many speakers take a POI at 5.58, it takes 10 seconds, the response takes 15 seconds, and then they run out of time to do the impacts on their last point. This is all a waste of time. Take your POI after your first point.
- Abstract POIs: If the POI is too abstract for you to understand, it's probably too abstract for the judges to understand. Say you don't understand, and move on.
- Waving down: Don't wave down a POI before the point is clear. This is as bad as not taking a POI.

##### **Matter, Manner, Method:**

Asian Parliamentary Debate is assessed by an Adjudicator Panel composed of an odd number according to the following criteria:

1. Matter (40) - substance of the debate, the arguments and evidence presented, and the logical reasoning and presentation of said arguments.
2. Manner (40) - the style of delivery, the persuasion skills, and the conduct of the debaters.
3. Method (20) - the response to the dynamics of the debate, and the observance of the rules of debate.

#### **Speaker Roles in Asian Parliamentary Debate:**

##### **i) Government:**

**Prime Minister (PM)**

Define context and parameters of debate. For example, in an open motion like "This House Would Support Musicians", the debate could be contextualized into whether music should be a commodity for trade, or it should be available gratis (i.e. free music download and transfer)

Provide concise background or history leading to the issue

Give framework of government bench's case. I.e. mechanisms (if any), argumentation flow (what the government's first argument is and what the Deputy Prime Minister will talk about)

Introduce 1st argument ;

Assert Government stand

**Deputy Prime Minister (DPM)**

Rebut first argument from Leader of Opposition

Rebut rebuttals to PM's argument

Introduce 2nd and 3rd argument

Reassert Government stand and case

**Government Whip:**

Rebut Deputy Leader of Opposition, and Leader of Opposition

Rebut rebuttals to DPM and PM arguments

Provide a deeper level of analysis for previous arguments and rebuttals

No new arguments, but new angles of arguments should be given

Brief summary of entire case of Government Reassert Government stand and case

**ii) Opposition:****Leader of Opposition**

Agree or disagree with context/ parameters of debate (any definitional challenges, accusations of squirreling, or unfair set up should be made from the LO speech and no later)

Rebut Prime Minister's argument

Give framework for Opposition case (if Opp. agrees to problem, then their case should provide solution, or at least effectively highlight how

Government proposal will worsen the situation)

Introduce First Opposition argument Assert Opposition stand

**Deputy Leader of Opposition:**

Rebut DPM and PM arguments

Rebut rebuttals to LO arguments

Introduce 1st and 2nd (if any) argument Reassert Opposition stand and case

**Opposition Whip:**

Rebut DPM and PM arguments

Rebut rebuttals to LO & DLO arguments

Provide a deeper level of analysis for previous arguments and rebuttals

No new arguments, but new angles of arguments should be given

Reassert Opposition stand and case

**Reply Speech:**

Can only be done by either 1st or 2nd speaker from each bench

Provide a biased 'oral adjudication' of why the debate should go to own bench Highlight issues you think your side won, carefully tip-toe around issues you think you lost

New examples to expand on discussed examples is usually allowed and makes the reply speech sound fresh as opposed to verbal regurgitation

Reassert stand

**Structure of Argument**



### **Prime minister**

- Establishes the debate
- Lays down the foundation and basic principles
- Gives out context, problem, SQ, policy, filters, standards, etc.

Structure:

1. Frame
  - Providing the problem / context / issues
  - What is the problem?
  - Why is statusquo not working? (and why alternatives are not enough)
2. Policy
  - What is your policy and how it will solve the problem?
  - Why your policy is the only one that works
  - Prongs
3. Arguments
  - Principle Argument
  - Pragmatic Argument

### **Leader of Opposition**

- Gives clash or counterpolicy
- Can also provides context, problem, SQ, standards, clarifications, etc.

Structure:

1. Clash
  - Clash
  - Clarification
  - Counter policy
2. Rebuttals
3. Arguments

### **Deputies**

- Continue to build the house while destroying the opposition at the same time
- Clarifies the debate (remind the adj why X is important, etc.)

Structure:

1. Rebuttals
2. Arguments (Extensions)

### **Whips**

- Summarizes the debate through issues
- Resolve deadlocks on issues identified
- Cannot give new arguments

Structure:

1. Issue
  - Identify issue
  - What they said, what we said
  - Why ours is better or why we won this issue



## REBUTTALS

- Rebuttal should be achieving specific strategic outcomes: keep on assessing/”judging” the debate from within the debate, try to estimate how a judge might view the interaction between cases/arguments in the debate
- Goal-oriented rebuttal should affect engagement in the following ways:
  - a) choices of what to rebut;
  - b) how said rebuttal is done;
  - c) directly communicating this to the judge ~ conclusions/“bottom line” of rebuttal

### Goal-oriented rebuttal

- Charitable reading principle, don’t strawman/rebut a weaker version of their case; pre-emptively rebutting stronger versions in opening
  - Like substantive points, rebuttal needs analysis
  - You need contradicting analysis of why their analysis is false, not just alternative analysis of why something else is true
- Rebuttal where:
  - Most commonly at the start of your speech, explicitly labeled as rebuttal, structured under different points of rebuttal
  - But can and should also be included in your arguments, especially where they directly clash with the other side’s material – called “integrated rebuttal” à can avoid “explaining the same thing twice”, time efficiency
- Focus on rebuttal – where to direct within an argument
  - Different parts of an argument have different effects on its standing
  - Don’t beat a dead horse!

## Types of rebuttal:

### explicit, implicit, pre-emptive

- Explicit: “they said X, which is untrue because...”
- Implicit: material proving the reverse of an argument, but not explicitly labelled as rebuttal
  - E.g. OG asserts the incentives of political parties mean they try to engage poor voters → OO explains why in the status quo the incentives of political parties work against engaging poor voters, implicitly engaging
- Pre-emptive: rebuttal before an argument is made
  - Can be explicit or implicit
  - Especially useful in opening half and leader speeches
  - Don’t worry too much about “giving them ideas”, just do it!

### Structure

- What they said → analyse why untrue (horizontal = several alternative reasons; vertical = chain of reasoning) impact (e.g. makes noncomparative, impact mitigated, point destroyed)
- Rebuttal is useful to layer: e.g. a) why what they claim isn’t true b) why even if it’s not true, it’s not that important

### rebutting premises

- Explicit or implicit assumptions underlying caseVs. tree analogy: cutting at the root/trunk
- Point out what an argument/case relies/hinges on rebut why this isn’t the case

### rebutting examples

- Be wary of only rebutting examples; this is not very useful if other logic/mechanisms for the point are given!



- Where examples are essential, try establishing that the example does not support their logic
  - Methods: criticising characterisation/outcome of example, unique circumstances/not applicable why dissimilar (timing, technology, context, geography, culture, etc.)

**rebutting analogies**

- Some cases depend on analogies, especially principle/morality arguments (EX. self defence analogies) breaking apart internal logic why analogy not analogous
- What is the analogy they use → break it down → find where dissimilar

**pointing out non-comparatives**

- Debates are judged on unique harms/benefits on either side making certain issues symmetrical/not exclusive to the other side can be highly beneficial
- Note what this is NOT: “well poverty will always exist on either side of the house” – if one side proves unique meaningful impact, they have a benefit/harm even if the issue is not completely solved!

**concessions in rebuttal**

- “Pick your fights” – most debates the other side has some parts/aspects of the debate they inevitably “win”, so concessions can be useful
  - A) make you seem reasonable, vs. denying obviously likely or even irrefutable claims
  - B) allow you to argue why you win the debate “in spite of” certain things being true
- E.g. free market vs. redistribution debates

**“even if”**

- Can seldom fully disprove the other side’s main points proving why you win even if the other side has certain impacts is highly useful
- Be very clear! Conceding vs. even if – emphasise the “even if” if you are not intending to make concessions

**Common Mistakes**

- Prioritisation: focus on making the strongest possible rebuttal to the most threatening arguments. Just because they said something silly, doesn’t mean their other points do not stand.
- Ignoring: a strong point ignored from the other side is a strong point left standing - judges write stuff down!
- Digressions: be wary of rebutting examples, incorrect facts, etc. at length - always consider whether rebuttal is necessary, and how much of it is necessary!

**Logical Fallacies**

- Argument from authority - smart people agreeing with your point do not prove your point, you still have to give justification. This includes documents/principles (e.g. “human rights”!). It also applies to majority agreeing with you.
- Straw man - judges have notes and know exactly what other team ran, you are not doing yourself a favor by twisting it.
- Slippery slope - Just because we pass one policy, doesn’t mean we will pass another one. Eg. If we censor offensive speech, you can’t just claim that we might censor all in the future because of it, you have to provide a logical link how one leads to the other.
- False dichotomy: e.g. “either we do this policy, or we do nothing about problem X” - look out for false dichotomies & make sure to challenge them explicitly





## Burdens

As early in the veto (if AP), you must already identify the burden that you need to prove.  
Ask yourself:

- >What do I need to prove in this debate?
- >What does the other house need to prove in the debate?

### What are burdens?

A burden is the bare minimum you need to defend in order to launch your arguments. If you cannot defend your burden, your arguments will mean nothing.

### How do you identify burdens?

A. The basic burdens the motion has set.

a. If there is a proposal, the burden is to prove why the proposal would make the world a better place.

Ex: THBT the world's poor would be justified to pursue complete Marxist government.

b. If it's a policy motion, the burden is to create a policy.

Ex: THW ban smoking.

c. If it's a regret/support motion, your burden is to evaluate it retrospectively and explain why it was worthy of a regret/support.

Ex: THR the rise of female iconography and their cults in feminism.

B. The burdens that you set for yourselves.

Ex: If you are in opposition, you say that you don't want to make a counter proposal, you just want to prove why the proposal of government makes the world worse off.

Ex: On THW aggressively put sin tax on cigarettes, your goal is to reduce the amount of people smoking, so that is your burden.

**Example:** THW impose death penalty to corrupt politicians.

**Burden of government:** Prove why death penalty is a commensurate punishment for corrupt Politicians.

**Not burden of government:** Prove why corruption is bad, because it is a universal truth and no one will rebut that.

**Burden of opposition:** You can prove why statusquo is working fine OR provide a counter proposal that if not instigate death penalty, what then?

**Example:** THR the rise of progressive narratives in Catholicism (Pope statements on LGBTQ+, etc.)

As government, it is not your burden to prove how you can abolish progressive narratives in Catholicism nor to prove why progressive narratives are bad in general, but why the rise of progressive narratives is bad in catholicism.

**Trade-offs:** Things that you are willing to sacrifice when launching your model/policy.

No house is perfect. You cannot fully launch a perfect model in a debate. It is important to have tradeoffs because it makes your house realistic and believable.

### Why is it important to identify burdens?

1. Pre-emption: You know what case the other house will likely run.
2. Makes you arguments consistent.

In policy debates, whenever the government launches a policy, it is almost at all times required for opposition to launch a counter policy. In value judgment debates, if ever the motion requires you to celebrate/regret something, you are required to provide a counterfactual.

Ex: THR the narrative that university education is the best path to success.

If you do not support the narrative, then WHAT NARRATIVE do you prefer? That is your counterfactual.