CAN 234

Britain Today: Debates and Dialogues

Course Handbook

Semester 2 (Spring 2016); ENS de Lyon.

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CENTRE DE LANGUES

ENS DE LYON

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Cover image: an umbrella in the rain in Piccadilly Circus. Moyan Brenn, flickr.com.

Introduction

Welcome to CAN 234, 'Britain Today: Debates and Dialogues'. I'm delighted that you've chosen to take the course this term. Since this is a relatively new course, I am particularly keen to receive feedback from you on your experiences of the progression between lessons, as well as on how effectively you feel you are learning. If you have any questions about the course at any point, please use this handbook as your first port of call; if the information you are looking for cannot be found in this book, please do not hesitate to email me or come and speak to me in person (my office is GN2 1 33A, Monod).

Course Aims

This course has two main aims: firstly, to develop your cultural awareness by stimulating discussions on some of the major social and cultural issues in Britain in 2016; and secondly, to improve your confidence and skills in English speaking and listening by participating in debates based on these issues. Of course, this course remains first and foremost a course in language, and as such you should expect to be learning new vocabulary every week, both through a regular reading of texts and through participating in debates.

Format of Seminars

We have a total of ten seminars together, with the eleventh being devoted to the written exam. There is a lot of material to be covered in a relatively short period of time, so it is crucial that you come to class, and that you use the lessons as *points de départ* for further research on the topic. For details of the broad thematic content of each week, please see the 'course outline' section of this folder. Each week will also cover a range of linguistic elements and debate skills, such as how to present effectively and the vocabulary necessary to construct an argument. These will be dealt with on a week-by-week basis.

How to Succeed

There is no 'magic formula' for this course, nor is there a fixed list of *compétences acquises* that will guarantee you 20/20 in the exam. Instead, the course places a high premium on enthusiasm, willingness to learn, and engagement, both with the subject at hand and with other students. As such, it will often be the case that there is no single 'right answer' to a question — especially in debates! — and as such you are heartily encouraged to speak up, and not to live in fear of making a mistake.

That said, I will of course be marking your submitted work according, in part, to its grammatical accuracy, and you will receive a completed mark sheet for each piece of work that you have submitted to me. Examples of these mark-sheets can be found in Appendix B at the back of this booklet.

A final note: this course is designed to be challenging for all students with a level of B2 and above in English. If you have a C1 level or above in English, please do not expect this course to be an 'easy ride'. If you did *prépa* before coming to the ENS, you might well be sick of hearing from the *rapports des jurys*, but the Mines-Ponts *rapport* from 2014 sums up very well the attitude that I'm looking for: 'Un élève qui se repose sur le niveau de son anglais pour débiter quelques banalités, n'a pas effectué le travail demandé.' The inverse is, of course, also true: it is not necessary to be bilingual in order to succeed either in the debates or in the written part of the course.

I hope you enjoy the course.

Course Outline

Week 1 (26/1 or 27/1) — The British political system

In our first week together, we will explore Britain's political system, and specifically how it elects its governments on a national level. After a 'whistle-stop tour' of the history of Parliament in Britain, we will move on to look at the main political parties in the UK and what happens during a General Election. In preparation for our first debate, which will take place in Week 2, we will begin to explore the various questions surrounding the system that the UK uses to elect its MPs, and ask what alternatives have been tried — and rejected.

> **Homework:** debate preparation for four students (each to deliver one six-minute speech during the debate). All other students to produce notes on the topic based on the seminar and on their own research, which will serve as prompts when devising questions at the end of the debate. Two students (not debating the following week) to prepare 'news briefing'.

Week 2 (2/2 or 3/2) — Government surveillance and the 'Snooper's Charter'

This week's debate: **"This house believes that the UK's electoral system should be reformed."**

One of the most immediate consequences of the Conservatives' 2015 election victory was the announcement that the controversial plans to restrict access to encrypted messaging services such as iMessage and WhatsApp — known to opponents as the 'Snooper's Charter' — could be reintroduced into the House of Commons. This seminar will explore the history of government surveillance in the UK, from the now-defunct debate over national identity cards to the very modern questions of whether, to paraphrase David Cameron, Britain should remain a 'passively tolerant society'.

> **Homework:** debate preparation / notes / news briefing (as appropriate).

Week 3 (9/2 or 10/2) — Britain and Europe, part I

This week's debate: **"This house believes that the 'Snooper's Charter' is an essential part of keeping Britain safe in the 21st century."**

In 2014, David Cameron promised that, if he were to win the 2015 General Election, he would hold a so-called 'in / out referendum' on the UK's membership of the European Union. Given events of last May, this referendum now seems inevitable, and its outcome is far from certain. This first class will trace the history of Britain's involvement with the EU, from its formation as the European Economic Community (or Common Market), to Britain's application to join, to the expansion of the EU in recent years.

> **Homework:** notes / news briefing (as appropriate).

Week 4 (16/2 or 17/2) — Britain and Europe, part II

(No debate this week.)

Our second and final seminar on Britain and Europe turns to the contemporary European question, and to the consequences of a potential 'Brexit' from the Union. We will look in detail at the debates held in 2014 between Nick Clegg and Nigel Farage on this issue, as well as examining the rise of UKIP as a political force.

> **Homework:** debate preparation / notes / news briefing (as appropriate). Essay on topics from Weeks 1-4, to be handed in at the start of Week 5 (after the half-term holiday).

Week 5 (1/3 or 2/3) — Immigration

This week's debate: **"This house believes that the UK should leave the EU."** First of two short 'Understanding the Issues' tests (see 'Assessment').

Immigration is perhaps the single most controversial issue in British popular politics today. The policies of successive governments have been under constant scrutiny, amidst increasing concern in some quarters that immigration is making the British 'strangeres in their own counry'. In particular, The removal of restrictions on immigration from Romania and Bulgaria has also caused a stir, with suggestions that immigration might be changing the social fabric of the country arguably one of the key factors in the rise of UKIP. We will prepare to debate this subject, looking at both empirical and anecdotal evidence in order to reach our own conclusions on the matter.

Homework: debate preparation / notes / news briefing (as appropriate).

Week 6 (8/3 or 9/3) — The British education system, part I: schools

This week's debate: **"This house believes that immigration has, overall, had a positive impact on the UK."**

The Anglo-Saxon model of education is remarkably different to the idea of *éducation nationale*. This week, we will explore two key questions that, in many ways, characterise the debates surrounding the British education system up to age 18: private schools and grammar schools. Private schools in particular maintaining a stranglehold on so-called 'elite' university admissions, and many of the most successful 'state' schools are in fact 'grammar' schools, which retain the right to select their pupils by ability at the age of 11. Grammar schools are certainly not 'politically correct', but are they, as their proponents argue, good for all students, not just the 'brightest and best'?

Homework: debate preparation / notes / news briefing (as appropriate).

Week 7 (15/3 or 16/3) — The British education system, part II: universities

This week's debate: **"This house believes that the UK should return to a selective state education system."**

The UK does not have *grandes écoles* in the French tradition; the term 'university' is used in a broader sense, and the number of students attending 'uni' has risen dramatically since 1997. One of the most controversial developments in recent years has been the introduction of what were initially called 'top-up' fees of £1,000 per student per year, although these have since risen to £3,000 in 2004 and again to up to £9,000 in 2012. Over the years, the term 'top-up' fees has fallen out of use, being replaced by a term that, if mentioned to a young person in the UK today, is sure to raise tempers: 'tuition fees'. The latest announcement of tuition fee increases, in 2010, was met with protests in London that dominated the news media, and resistance, in the form of groups such as *UK Uncut* and the *National Coalition Against Fees and Cuts*, remains tenacious today. Do these increases represent one generation rejecting the social contract, refusing to shoulder the burden of educating the next, or are they a necessary response to an unprecedented explosion in student numbers?

Homework: debate preparation / notes / news briefing (as appropriate).

Week 8 (22/3 or 23/3) — The benefits debate

This week's debate: **"This house agrees with Jeremy Corbyn that tuition fees should be abolished."**

In 2014, Channel 4 in the UK produced the controversial documentary series, *Benefits Street.* This 'fly-on-the-wall' production followed the daily lives of the residents of James Turner Street, one of the poorest residential areas in the city of Birmingham. The programme courted controversy from the outset, with Channel 4 accused of peddling 'poverty porn' and presenting benefits claimants in an unfairly negative light. The 'benefits debate' has been reignited in the past few months by the new Government's Welfare Reform and Work Bill, seen by supporters as a necessary restructuring of the welfare budget and by its opponents as a cynical and ideologically-motivated attempt to punish the poorest in society. In one memorable speech, the now-Labour Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, declared that he would 'swim through vomit' to oppose the Bill. This echoes our key question in our eighth seminar: is the 'welfare bill' too high? Is Britain becoming an 'entitlement nation'?

Homework: debate preparation / notes / news briefing (as appropriate).

Week 9 (29/3 or 30/3) — 'Zero-hours contracts' and the job market

This week's debate: **"This house believes that the Conservative government is right to reduce welfare spending."**

While Britain may be emerging from recession, the jobs market remains precarious, with an increasing proportion of the population hired on so-called 'zero-hours' contracts with no fixed minimum amount of time worked per week. These contracts have been praised as offering a more flexible labour market, while those opposed paint them as damaging to individuals and as an expansion of the power of 'big business'. Days after the Labour Party pledged to eliminate zero-hours contracts during the General Election campaign this year, several of its highest-profile backers were themselves accused of hiring workers on zero-hours contracts and of supporting unpaid internships. How damaging are these contracts, and what are their consequences? Is it possible that they are in fact a 'blessing in disguise?

Homework: debate preparation / notes / news briefing (as appropriate). Essay on topics from Weeks 5-9, to be handed in at the start of Week 10.

Week 10 (5/4 or 6/4) — Revision and recap

This week's debate: **"This house believes that so-called 'zero-hours contracts' should be illegal."** Second of two short 'Understanding the Issues' tests (see 'Assessment').

This week is set aside for revision for the final examination, which will take place in Week 11.

Homework: revision for final examination.

Week 11 (12/4 or 13/4) — Written examination

Final examination (see 'Assessment').

Assessment

Structure of Assessment

The assessment for this course is split between continuous assessment, done throughout the course, and a final exam in Week 11. Each will count for 50% of your final mark, which will be given out of 20. The table below sets out each element of assessment in more detail.

SPOKEN ASSESSMENT (40% OF FINAL MARK)		
Task	**% of final mark**	**Details**
Principal speaker	25 %	An assessment of your performance in a debate, examining both your content and your persuasive skills. You will have the opportunity to debate in this way twice; your best mark of the two will count towards your final grade.
Summary speaker	15 %	An assessment of your performance as a 'summary speaker'. The challenge here is to synthesise arguments of speakers before you, without adding any of your own, into a single argument. As with the 'principal speaker' task, you will have the opportunity to debate in this way twice; your best mark of the two will count towards your final grade.
	or	
News briefing	15 %	An exercise that tests your ability to synthesise and present information. Two days beforehand, you will be sent a news article, which you will be required to present to the class (who will not have seen the article) in a three-minute summary speech. Your goal should be to be as informative as possible, while rephrasing the text to meet the demands of the short summary.

WRITTEN ASSESSMENT (60% OF FINAL MARK)		
Task	**% of final mark**	**Details**
Understanding the issues	2 x 10% (20%)	Two short (20-minute) written exams that test your understanding of the issues raised by the course. These tests will be given in Weeks 5 and 10.
Final exam essay	30 %	Students are required to write a 250-word essay response to a question that requires them to give and justify their opinion on a social, cultural or political issue.
Submitted essays	2 x 5% (10%)	Marks from two 250-word essays submitted during the course.

Assessment Criteria

This table provides details on what is asked of you at each level of assessment. Whether a student receives, for instance, 14 or 15 as a mark will depend on the degree with which the specified goals have been met.

Mark / 20	Objectives
20	**Exceptional.** Practically no linguistic errors. Argument is clear and fully developed in its implications and limitations. Would be capable of debating on reasonably even terms with a native speaker of English.
19	
18	**Excellent.** Some minor linguistic errors that nevertheless do not impede comprehension. Accent, if applicable, is authentic, displaying a sound grasp of English phonetics and phonology. Argumentation is well-considered, nuanced, and developed.
17	
16	**Very good.** Accent, if applicable, is good. Argumentation is generally developed. Minor errors.
15	**Good.** Demonstrates reasonable ability to construct an argument, and expresses it (if applicable) with an accent that would pose no major problems of comprehension to a native speaker. One or two major linguistic errors may, however, be present at this level. Evidence of research.
14	
13	**Fair.** Writing and speech demonstrate structure, although possibly straying away at points. Accent, if applicable, betrays some evidence of French, to the extent that it might occasionally cause phonological problems (issues of comprehension). Several major linguistic errors.
12	
11	**Acceptable.** Comprehensible on an overall level, although with clear evidence of difficulty in spoken and / or written language. Difficulties in expression, or lack of effort, prevent arguments from being considered and evaluated in their entirety.
10	
9	**Poor.** Significant parts of speech or writing are not sufficiently developed to serve their purpose. Frequent 'Frenchisms' which inhibit comprehension and expression. Students at this level are often capable of higher marks, but have not worked sufficiently to demonstrate this.
8	
7	**Very poor.** Significant elements are incomprehensible, indicating a superficial or otherwise insufficient engagement with the topic. Some effort may have been made, but a significantly greater amount of research and time would have been necessary to achieve a higher mark.
6	
5	**Unacceptable.** An almost wholly-inadequate presentation or essay which has very little to commend it. This mark may also be used where there is significant evidence of plagiarism.
4	
3	
2	
1	
0	Mark awarded by default for all work not submitted.

Submission Guidelines, Late Submission and Absences

Essays should be written by hand wherever possible, and double-spaced (one line left between each line of writing). Essays may be typed or hand-written, but they should be handed to me in person (in hard copy) if at all possible. Unless otherwise stated, essays are due the week after they are set (so, for instance, an essay set during Week 4's lesson should be handed in at the start of Week 5's lesson). If you are late to submit an essay, you will have three additional days to hand it in, for each day of which one mark will be deducted from your final mark (up to a maximum of three). Work handed in after this three-day window will be awarded a 0.

You are expected to justify all absences, and should be prepared to provide a *certificat d'absence* if requested. Please be aware that it is your responsibility to catch up on work from any classes missed; do not wait for me to send you an email!

Appendix A: Debate Rules

Preparation for Debates

The motion for each debate can be found in the course outline.

Students will find out who is competing in the following week's debate at the end of each lesson, and will have that week to prepare their contributions. During the week, each team should work collaboratively on the preparation of their arguments, and each student should be prepared to present their argument as part of a team. There are several methods of 'dividing up' arguments between speakers, among the most effective of which is to deal with specific issues separately: social, economic, political … the challenge, of course, is to do so in a way which is not artificial, and which plays to the strengths of each speaker.

Outline of Debates

The order of speakers is as follows: first proposition — first opposition — second proposition — second opposition. Each speaker is allowed a maximum of 6 minutes to speak. The first and last minute of these six minutes are 'protected time', during which no interruptions are allowed. Outside of this time, speakers may be interrupted by a Point of Information (PoI) from a member of the opposing team:

- It is made by raising one's hand and saying, 'point of information'.
- Each speaker is penalised if they refuse to accept any PoIs; however, they are expected to take no more than two (possibly three) in any speech.
- Acceptance or refusal of a PoI should be made clear, communicated politely either verbally or through a gesture.
- PoIs are included in the timing of the speech.
- PoIs are short, concise and usually open-ended questions that are used by the opposite team to highlight the weaknesses in their adversary's argumentation.

At the end of the debate, the chairman will open the debate to the floor, whereupon members of the audience will be invited to ask questions. Each team will be allowed 30 seconds to respond to the question, during which one member of the team only may speak. After questions from the audience have been completed, each team's summary speaker will then have an opportunity to synthesise the main arguments from their side in a 3-minute speech.

During the debate, team members are expected to speak exclusively in English, including among themselves.

Appendix B: Sample Marking Grids

These marking grids are designed to give an indication of how the Assessment Criteria operate in practice. They should be read in conjunction with the above criteria.

Debate Participation — Marking Sheet	
Name	John Smith
Date	29th February 2016
Topic / Role	"THBT private schools should be abolished" / 1st proposition

Content	**Language**
Structure good: clearly 'signposted' major points and easy to follow. Points (unjust, elitist, economically draining) made in a logical order and with good progression. Some ideas not fully thought through: what exactly do you mean by 'elitist'? Did not accept any POIs — significant problem.	Delivery weak. Rushed, and looked down at notes / table at frequent intervals, limiting ability to convey and articulate points. Needs to gain in confidence before his assessed debate. Good use of specific vocabulary to express points succinctly: 'state sector'. Some minor article errors: '*the secondary school', '*ø British education system'.
Final Mark	13 /20

Assessed Essay — Marking Sheet	
Name	John Smith
Date	29th February 2016
Title	"Unpaid internships are exploitative and should be banned."

Content	**Language**
Dangerously close to a "thèse / antithèse / synthèse" structure at times! Need a clear 'prise de position' early on in order to articulate a convincing argument. Arguments in favour very well-structured.	Excellent linguistic ability, with impressive turns of phrase in introduction and conclusion and an awareness of hierarchy in order to structure points (moving beyond 'firstly / secondly / thirdly').
Final Mark	15 /20

Appendix C: Guidance for Speakers [1]

Preparing for the Debate

Six minutes can seem like a long time if you have nothing to say. Your first task, then, is to research the motion you are given, even those topics on which you are an expert. It is likely that somewhere on the Internet, in an encyclopaedia or in a newspaper you will find a piece of evidence, such as a statistic or a little-known fact, that could devastate an argument of your opponents.

Try to think about how you would argue the other side of the motion, that is, as if you were your own opponents. Once you have listed their arguments, make sure you have answers to them. But be careful of pre-empting them and bringing up arguments for their side before they have used them: you may just be giving them ideas that they would not otherwise have thought of. It is useful to have a list of opposition arguments and counter-arguments on the table in front of you during the debate. Then, when your opponents do introduce these arguments, you can quickly make a point of information or start working the reply into your speech.

No talented debater writes out a speech word for word, even to memorise and discard it. Using a system of notes allows you many benefits. You will find it easier to look the audience in the eye; you will deliver your speech more naturally and fluently, and you will be able to add rebuttal arguments to the relevant parts of your speech as you think of them. For example:

Instead of writing this out ...	**... try making notes like this:**
There are many reasons why we should implement a 15% import tax of bananas being brought into Britain. First, the countries producing bananas are clearly making far too much money for their own good — for example, Atlantis or Sparta — and we should penalise their greed.	Advocate: 15% import tax on bananas. Why? 1 **International benefits** Penalise rich and greedy banana growers — e.g. Atlantis, Sparta
Not only would the banana tax punish nations who flaunt their wealth, but it would also provide tangible financial benefits in this country. This banana tax would raise £15 million because there are currently 100 million bananas imported every year, sold at £1each. The £15 millilon could easily be used to fund a new Academy for Non-Organic Insect Drevelopment.	2 **Increased revenue** Not only punish ... also fin. benefits here 100m imported = £15m in revenue — to fund Academy of Non-Org Insect Dev.
This new academy would be able to carry out research from its inception, unlike the Ministry for Raising Banana Tax, which has employed 27 people since 1994 without ever doing anything useful. A banana tax would, finally, justify its existence.	3 **Resources already available** Justify salaries at Ministry of Rais. Ban. Tax — 27 employees since 1994

[1] This material has been (slightly) adapted from Trevor Sother (ed.), *Pros and Cons: A Debater's Handbook*, 18th edn. (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 2-9.

Structuring Your Speech

A debating speech delivers a great deal of information to the audience and to the adjudicators. Sadly, most humans do not have a very long attention span and it is unlikely that they will take in all the information unless you make it easy for them. This means **structuring** your speech. You should not have more than three or four different arguments in your speech — and even if you only have one argument, you should look at only three or four case-studies to support it. No-one will remember your points if you have seventeen of them.

Divide your speech into sections. Signpost each section. Make sure each has an introduction and a summary all of its own. In effect, you are giving a running commentary on yourself, describing what position in your own speech you have reached.

> **Next I am going to expand on a related point, which is** what we could do with the money raised by a banana tax. Let's consider the figures. We currently import 100 million bananas a year and sell them for £1 each. If we put a 15% sales tax on each banana sold, we would raise another £15 million. This, incidentally, is the exact cost of setting up an Academy for Non-Organic Insect Development. **So my second point is this: the banana tax would bring clear benefits to insect research.** Not only would it do this, however …

In other words, keep drumming your points in by repeating them constantly. Make sure you summarise all your arguments at the end of the speech. Of course, this structure also applies to the team as a while. The first speaker should mention briefly the points that the second speaker will make, and the second will remind us of arguments used by the first:

> I will be talking about bananas and pears, while my partner, Robin, will go on in her speech to discuss the wider implications of the existence of fruit.

Timing is very important in the context of structure. If you have three points of roughly equal importance, make sure you spend equal time on them! Be very careful not to spend so much time on your first point that you are forced to cram your other two into your last minute.

Finally, although you may have lots of different points to make, do not forget that they all tie into one guiding principle which you are trying to prove (or disprove): the motion. After every argument or example, remind the audience how this shows that the motion is true (or false).

Thinking on Your Feet: Points of Information and Rebuttal

Remember that the ability to think quickly and deal with unforeseen arguments is what differentiates debating from public speaking. There are two major areas where you need to think on your feet.

Both speakers should make and accept **points of information.** It is the only way to show that you are on top of your material and not simply reading out a speech that someone else could have prepared. Offering points, even if they are not accepted, shows that you are interested and active in the debate; accepting them shows you are confident of your arguments. A team that does neither of these is not debating.

When offering a point, you should stand up and say 'On a point of information' (or simply 'Point of information'). If you are not accepted, sit down again. If you are, you may make a simple point lasting no longer than 15 seconds — do not try to make a mini-speech. You are best advised to offer a fact that disproves what the other speaker is saying, to point out a contradiction in his or her argument, or to ask for further information. Your point should be related to the current topic of discussion.

There is a real knack to accepting points of information which comes with practice. Do not take points in mid-sentence, or when you are unsure of what you are saying and could come unstuck. Do not take two in quick succession, and do not take too many. It is easy to be distracted and diminish the impact of your own speech. You should aim to take two (possibly three) in a six-minute speech, at natural pauses, but remember that you should

reply to them (even if it is simply to say 'no thank you') as soon as possible. Interruptions cannot simply be ignored!

You are also required to address the arguments that the other team has come up with during their speech(es). Even if you find yourself agreeing with a point, you must find some way of undermining it so that it is less appealing to the audience or judges. Question its relevance, point out how it is inconsistent with something else they were saying, or simply disprove it.

There are different ways of fitting **rebuttal** into your speech. One way is to spend the first few minutes addressing the major points of your opponents, before going on to your main constructive material. You might choose just to seize on several unconnected statements your opponents have made, especially if they can be made to look ridiculous out of context. This is known as **scattergun rebuttal**.

Another method is to **sort the rebuttal** into your speech. For example, if you are planning on covering three different areas — perhaps the economic, social and international benefits of a certain plan — then rebut their economic points during your economic section and so on. This will show adjudicators that you have identified the key arguments and seen how they all fit together.

The Roles of the Speakers

i) The First Proposition

The role of the **First Proposition speaker** is to define the motion, and to describe exactly what the basis for the debate will be. This means that you must first explain any ambiguous words, second, set any limits to the debate and third, interpret the motion as a whole and state exactly what contention you are going to try and prove. Some things to think about are:

> **This House would censor the Internet**
>
> What exactly do we mean when we say 'Internet' — is it the web, email, or anything transmitted though an Internet connection? What sort of things should we aim to censor? Who for? What is censorship, and who is going to do it? In this case, a valid definition would be: 'the British government should make it illegal for any written, pictorial or video material that is racist, sexist, homophobic, or pornographic to be sent or posted on the World Wide Web.'[2]
>
> **This House would respect its elders**
>
> Who exactly is 'this House', and who are its 'elders'? Is respect a vague feeling towards someone, or does it require a definite action? In this situation it is acceptable (although not mandatory) to tie the motion to a specific issue, in order to provide a focused debate. A valid definition would be: 'The vast majority of people who have made major beneficial differences to society were over the age of 55, and should be supported.' An equally good definition would be: 'The British government should provide guaranteed welfare for the elderly and abandon plans to privatise the state pension.'

Although it is generally accepted that the Proposition may define the motion any way it chooses, intelligent and straightforward definitions are expected. In particular, a good definition must be fair to the Opposition. In particular, a good definition must be fair to the Opposition and give its members an equal case to argue back. If, for example, the proposers of the motion 'This House would break a bad law' defined 'bad law' as being 'a law that it is impossible to observe, such as a law against breathing', then such a law must *by definition* be broken and the opposition has nothing to argue. This is a **truistic** definition and would result in the Proposition being heavily penalised.

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[2] Of course, this definition is not flawless, particularly given the thorny issues surrounding what constitutes each of these terms, and whether or not pornography is always worthy of censorship.

On the other hand, motions are taken as being general principles rather than as statements of absolute truth. In other words, if you are arguing that 'the UN is impotent', you only have to show that in the **vast majority** of cases this is true, rather than in **every single case**. There are always one or two small exceptions to anything, but the Opposition should not win this debate unless it shows that the UN *has had* a *major* area of success.

After the definition, the first proposer should say how the case will be split between the two speakers, and then go on to prove his or her half.

ii) The First Opposition

The job of the **'First Opp'** speaker is to rebut the arguments of the Proposition (perhaps by highlighting inconsistencies or weaknesses) and to explain why there is a difference between the two sides. This speaker is the first to isolate what exactly the debate will be about, by saying which part (if any) of the Proposition's case his side will agree with, and which part it intends to dispute. He or she will then go on to explain the structure of the Opposition case, and to prove his or her points.

Here you must be prepared to be flexible, as you may need to react to a slightly unusual or unexpected definition. You should accept any definition by the proposition unless it presents an unreasonable or clearly irrelevant interpretation of the motion, or if it is truistic and does not leave you a side to argue. In these cases you may **challenge** the definition by stating your reasons for rejecting it and introducing an alternative interpretation. The second Prop speaker must adopt your definition unless he or she can prove that his or her team's is valid.

It must be emphasised that definitional debates are generally not good ones. The best debates involve an interesting and fair proposition which the first Opposition speaker accepts.

iii) The Second Proposition and Opposition speakers

The second speakers on each team should divide their time between rebutting points made by their opponents and continuing with their side of the argument. At the end of a second speech, a brief summary of the whole argument of your side should be given.

iv) Summary Speeches

Summary speeches should be made by the summary speaker, immediately after the 'floor debate' (questions from the audience). It is intended to review the major issues of the debate and to leave a lasting impression in the minds of the audience or adjudicators that is favourable to your side. A summary speaker has been compared with a 'biased news reporter', going over the various arguments that have already been made but implying that your side has won them all.

It is important to concentrate on the major areas of difference between the two sides, rather than on trivial points or areas of agreement. Your job is to remind the audience 'exactly where we disagreed in this debate', and then to prove why your arguments in these areas are superior. You are therefore looking at the **debate as a whole**, rather than simply reviewing points one by one.

New arguments should not be introduced into a summary speech: you are reviewing the debate that has already happened, not starting a new one. However, if major arguments have been raised in a floor debate, you should also incorporate those into your speech.

Appendix D: Guidance for Timekeepers

Your task as timekeeper is to make sure the debate runs to time. This is important for two reasons: firstly, to guarantee all participants in the debate an equal amount of time to make their points; and secondly, to ensure that we don't over-run and have to cut the seminar short afterwards!

Please make sure that you have a **stopwatch** with you during the debate (a smartphone stopwatch is fine). During speeches, you should use clear signals to inform speakers when they have reached certain points in their allotted time:

- For **main speakers**, knock once on the table at one minute; once at five minutes; and twice at six minutes;
- For summary speakers (and news briefings), knock once on the table at two and a half minutes, and twice at three minutes.