

## Chapter 7

### *How to Flow*

"Flowing" is the technical debate term for the art of taking notes. The purpose of a flow is to track the development of specific arguments throughout the debate: the flow should tell you what was argued and when it was argued (i.e. in what speech a particular argument was made.)

**RULE:** The flow should tell you what was argued when in an easily read format.



To flow, any type of paper can be used. Generally, however, the so-called "flow pad" or legal pad is used. For beginning debaters, this pad should be used horizontally with the binding on the left. Four vertical lines are drawn to divide the flow pad into five equal sections. Each of these columns represents a particular speech. The debater labels each column "1AC," "1NC," "1AR," "NR," "2AR" respectively. Everything that appears in the first column, then, was said in the First Affirmative Constructive. Everything that appears in the second column was said in the First Negative Constructive. etc...

<u><b>1AC</b></u>	<u><b>1NC</b></u>	<u><b>1AR</b></u>	<u><b>NR</b></u>	<u><b>2AR</b></u>
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Cross-Examination periods do not usually appear on the flow. If any important admission is made, the debater can indicate it on the line dividing speeches.

### **First Affirmative Constructive**

Take notes about the affirmative case in the column labeled 1AC. But what do you flow?

1. *the outline/structure of the case*
2. *definitions*
3. *the value*
4. *the key logical steps in the argument*
5. *analogies and examples*
6. *evidence sources and what they say*

For example, if you heard the following case:

Imagine a state of nature. Because no government exists, people can do anything they want. Conscience governs some of the people but not all. There is no order but there is crime. As a result, a social contract is created and government is formed. Because democracy is that just government, I affirm today's resolution, Resolved: that democracy best promotes man's important values. To fully understand the implications of this resolution, we must define the following primary terms: Democracy – direct government of, by, and for the people that is usually confined to small numbers. Promote – to help forward. With these two definitions in mind, I offer the following observation: the negative must prove that other political systems are better than democracy. Mere flaws found in democracy are not enough to disprove the resolution. Contention 1. Democracy promotes the value of the individual. Of all of man's values, the individual is one of the most important. This can be seen in subpoint A. The individual is very important. Supreme Court Justice Brandeis makes clear in Law and Democracy that the individual is very important. "What are American ideals? They are the development of the individual for his own and the common good." Subpoint B. Democracy views all individuals as equal. The fundamental principle of democracy is that everyone has an equal voice in government. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy declares this as true: "Democracy, according to this view, requires the dispersal, not the concentration, of power: every voter has his quantum, making him worth the attention of those who want to govern." The Encyclopedia of Philosophy reaffirms the concept of one man one vote. Subpoint C. Democracy protects individual rights. President Ronald Reagan once stated in an address on December 10, 1984: "But we do a serious disservice to the cause of human rights if we forget that, however mistaken and wrong, however stumbling the actions of democracies in seeking to achieve the ideals of freedom and brotherhood, our philosophy of government permits us to acknowledge, debate, and then correct mistakes, injustices, and violations of human rights." As President Reagan attests, democracies allow the prevention or cessation of human rights abuses. Along with the individual, democracy also promotes popular sovereignty. Contention 2. Democracy promotes popular sovereignty. Subpoint A. Democracy places control with the people. Instead of having the government controlling society, a democracy places the government under the control of society. This is good. That is why, as Stanley I. Benn notes, democracy is also called "government by the people" or "popular self-government." Subpoint B. Democracy is based upon the social contract. The social contract is the theoretical agreement between the people and a government, constituting a basis for a just society. Democracy is based upon the social contract. Subpoint C. True democracy insures good law. Since the people are in control, no law is created that harms society. The Encyclopedia of Philosophy comes to the same conclusion. "Moreover, since the people are sovereign, the traditionally important safeguards against the abuse of power become otiose; for, in Rousseau's words, 'the sovereign, being formed wholly of individuals who compose it, neither has nor can have any interest contrary to theirs.'" Obviously, democracy promotes all values related to the concept of society. Contention 3. Democracy promotes the quality of life. Subpoint A. The Quality of Life is important. The only incentive for living is a good quality of life. If one is going to suffer, existence loses much of its meaning. Two crucial values connected with the quality of life are freedom and justice. Subpoint B. Democracy promotes freedom and justice. Democracy, as has already been proven, is based upon the social contract. Since the social contract promotes freedom and justice, it is logical that democracy promotes freedom and justice. Ultimately, democracy promotes the individual, society, justice, freedom, and all other values associated with these. All of which, are man's most important values. The resolution, therefore, is affirmed.

Read the passage into a tape recorder or have someone else read it to you. Try to take notes as to what was said.

The flow should resemble the following:

IAC	INC	IAR
Intro: Social Contract		
def. Dem - gvt. of, by, for; small #s Promote - forward		
Obs. must show other better		
C1. dem upholds Ind. a. indiv. most imp Brandeis: "American ideal" b. dem. holds Ind. equal Enc. of Phil - one man/vote c. dem. = indiv. rights Reagan quote prevents/corrects rights viol.		
C2. popular sovereignty a. people in control Stanley Benn: "gvt. by ppl" b. dem upon social contract c. dem = good law people in control won't pass law that hurts self Rousseau		

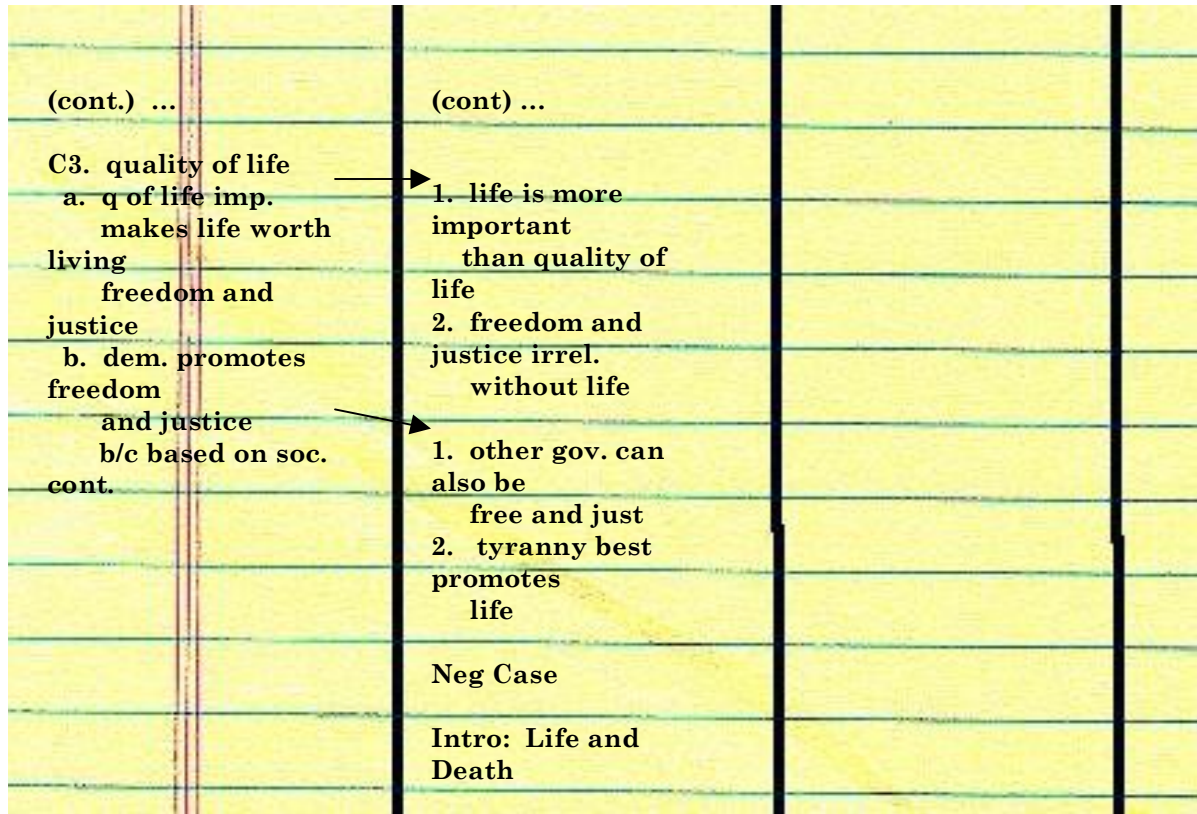
While you flow, pay very close attention; don't let your mind wander. Listen carefully and listen before you write. Most of a speech is pure rhetoric. Learn to cut to the core of the argument and write down the gist. Eventually, you should become so efficient that you can immediately write down your responses to their arguments in the other columns as they are speaking.

## The Subsequent Speeches

For the 1NC, flow the negative case in the same way you do the Affirmative one. The only difference is where you place the notes. Flow the case in the second column and underneath the Affirmative case as the following example shows:

(cont.) ...		
<b>C3. quality of life</b>		
<b>a. q of life imp.</b>		
<b>makes life worth</b>		
<b>living</b>		
<b>freedom and</b>		
<b>justice</b>		
<b>b. dem. promotes</b>		
<b>freedom</b>		
<b>and justice</b>		
<b>b/c based on soc.</b>		
<b>cont.</b>		
	<b>Neg Case</b>	
	<b>Intro: Life and</b>	
	<b>Death</b>	
	<b>Value: Life</b>	
	<b>defs:</b>	
	<b>democraey</b>	
	<b>promote</b>	
	<b>Obs. 1. Life most</b>	
	<b>imp.</b>	
	<b>w/o life, other values</b>	
	<b>useless</b>	
	<b>C1. Dictatorship</b>	
	<b>best</b>	
	<b>upholds life.</b>	
	<b>Karl Marx quote</b>	
	<b>“the object of the</b>	
	<b>state</b>	
	<b>is to protect life . .</b>	
	<b>.”</b>	
	<b>... (cont.)</b>	

As for the refutation of arguments, flow responses next to the arguments they refer to and connect them with an arrow. For example,



This same method is used for all of the speeches. The key is to "flow" the arguments in the right place. Stay in the right column (that represents the right speech) and make arrows to show where certain arguments are applied.

### When To Flow

When you are listening, you flow. The problem arises when you are speaking. All prepared cases should be "pre-flowed." In other words, if you are Affirmative, you flow your case before the debate even begins. If you are Negative, you flow your case in the lower half of the page in the second column. As for rebuttals, you flow 1) as you flow their speech. You should begin to write down your responses as you write down their arguments. 2) during prep time and 3) if you don't have enough time, you go back and fill in the blanks during your opponent's prep time. Remember what you said. Write down short tags that remind you what you are going to say. Then, when you get up to do your rebuttal speech, go down the flow by following the list of responses as you wrote them down.

## Helpful Hints

1. Practice printing small and legibly.
2. Drop vowels and abbreviate words. Develop your own form of shorthand.
3. Use two different colored pens. Use one for the Affirmative speeches and one for the Negative's. You can also flow cross-examination in a third color if you'd like.
4. Develop symbols.

Sample Symbols:	
“group arguments”	}
dropped argument	X
upholds, supports, etc.	↑
undermines, etc.	↓
my value is ...	V =
justice	J
leads to, causes, etc.	→

Practice using these symbols and develop your own. For example, the following means "The value is justice. When we get justice, society is enhanced:"

**RULE:** Flowing is discipline that requires practice.

Practice taking notes in class using the flowing technique. Practice flowing debate rounds. Study the attached sample flow. Anyone can flow with practice.