## Impacts

### Big “I” Impacts, small “i” impacts, and argument resolution by impacting your arguments

#### Intro

The word impact is used in several contexts in policy debate. It is important to understand what debaters, coaches, and judges mean when they are discussing impacts because impacts are a critical component to winning debates. This brief directional will explain what I mean by Impacts, impacts, and their significance in the grand scheme of debate.

#### 1. Big “I” Impacts, the argument type

Big “I” Impacts are the typical way debaters think of the word. “Impact” in this sense of the word is the classification of an argument type which explains why something is good or bad. The impact is the last card you read on a particular “scenario,” whether it is an advantage, disadvantage, or critique. These “scenarios” tend to have a description of the status quo (Uniqueness), some sort of relationship or change to the status quo (Link), and then the reason that relationship is good or bad (Impact). The judge is in the position of a decision-maker choosing between the opportunities and costs of preferring the status quo, the plan, or some alternative course of action. Impacts demonstrate the opportunity-cost.

#### Example #1.1: Climate Advantage

**Uniqueness**- Climate change is occurring now

**Link**- reducing US alliances decreases global emissions

**Impact**- climate change causes extinction

#### Example #1.2: 2020 Election DA

**Uniqueness**- Biden will win the 2020 election

**Link**- following through on campaign promises shores up support in swing states which helps Trump win the election

**Impact**- Trump will first strike Iran which triggers extinction

#### Example #1.3: China Threat Construction Kritik

**Link**- describing China as a driver of conflict ignores how US actions provoke China

**Impact**- constructing China as a threat results in self-fulfilling actions which make war with China inevitable

**Alternative**- policymakers should rethink how they conceptualize Chinese actions

#### 2. The importance of Impacts

The reason impacts are important is intuitive – why should anyone care about a “thing” unless you have told them that particular “thing” is good or bad? That is the case with impacts to debate arguments – absent some explanation of why something the plan causes is good or bad, the judge has no reason to care.

This intuition is critical to remember – every scenario you read needs an impact. Without it, it is not considered offense in the debate, or in other words, you cannot win on the scenario. You need offensive justifications to win debates. Likewise, you can prioritize arguments based on whether they are offense. If a team does not read an impact to a disadvantage, or if a team is not able to read an impact to an add-on before the 2ac ends, this should enter into your strategic calculations for your next speech: 1) you should make an argument in your speech to the judge that the team has not read an impact; 2) make an argument that the other team should not have the opportunity to read a new one, and if they do, you should be able to answer it then; and 3) answer the portions of the argument they have read. Strategically, you should allocate your time knowing that the other team cannot win on a scenario without an impact, but you also should anticipate that the other team will read one if it matters to their overall strategy, particularly if you fail to answer the portions of the scenario they did read. But, it is also reasonable to think that if the team failed to read an impact to an argument, it wasn’t that important to their strategy in the first place, and you can take that into consideration for your time investment in answering the argument.

A last consideration is that the failure to read an impact has left a strategic opening which you can exploit – the other team has yet to say something is good. You can say that thing is bad – initiate an impact turn debate – while having one more speech than the other team to read cards on the issue. This has happened in many debates, and it is more common than you may think. An impact card may have a laundry list of impacts, but a team chooses only to read an impact to one of them. This leaves you with the option to read impact turns to the others.

#### Example #2.1: NATO DA

Uniqueness- cooperation between US and NATO over security issues is high now

Link- plan ends security cooperation

Internal link- security cooperation key to the alliance

Impact- alliance solves extinction

Not infrequently, teams will read a general “extinction” card which may very well discuss something like climate change as an existential threat. It may also mention proliferation, terrorism, and growth. Neg teams read cards like this for the sake of efficiency and strategy – having a card with multiple impacts in the 1nc gives the option to read more evidence on each of those issues in the 2nc or 1nr, but it also will tend to be short to save the 1nc time without having to read an additional impact card saying climate change or proliferation causes extinction. At the same time, an additional card discussing climate change may have a defense of the science behind it, or it may describe better the impact or even preempt impact turns. Instead, the neg is in a worse position in terms of being prepared to debate impact turns of the extinction-level impact they have read, and have read no impacts to the other scenarios listed in the card. An aff team may find it strategic to cards on why proliferation is good or growth is bad as impact turns when the neg has no initial defense of those impacts. The important thing to remember is that reading impacts to your scenarios is important, and when you haven’t, you have hurt yourself strategically. Not only do you not have offense, you have given your opponents a potential strategic avenue.

#### 3. A caveat to reading impacts to every scenario and external impacts.

There is at least one scenario where the decision NOT to read an impact makes perfect sense strategically. You should not read an impact that has already been read in the debate to avoid redundancy. A “disease causes extinction” works as an impact to disease regardless of whether the aff or neg has read it. If you choose to read a scenario that ends with disease, and your opponent has already read a disease impact, you do not need to read another card on it. This happens all the time and is frustrating to watch as a judge. For example, the 1nc will read an econ impact after the 1ac already read one, and sometimes even the same econ impact. This is almost always a waste of time.

This has important implications for offense and winning debates. If both teams go for “Russia War goes nuclear” impacts, who wins? Teams can debate about the quality of the scenarios and can compare them, but ultimately debates like this are difficult for judges to resolve. On the one hand, having a way to access your opponent’s impact with your scenario is useful as a way to mitigate their offense because it is no longer a unique reason your opponent can win since you also have that offense. But, it is a double-edged sword and no longer a unique reason for you to win either. It is useful to have what is called an external piece of offense, or an external impact, for the judge to evaluate. Compare the following:

#### Example #3.1: Election DA with an external impact in the 1nc

1ac- plan solves North Korean nuclearization which causes extinction

1nc- plan causes Trump to win the 2020 election which causes US-China war that goes nuclear

2ac- answers the DA

2nc- Trump enables North Korean nuclearization

#### Example #3.2: Election DA with an external impact in the 2nc

1ac- plan solves North Korean nuclearization which causes extinction

1nc- plan causes Trump to win the 2020 election which enables North Korean nuclearization

2ac- answers the DA

2nc- Trump win causes US-China war that goes nuclear

In the end, both examples result in an external impact. This is good because the judge has a tie-breaker. Assuming that North Korean nuclearization happens in the world of the plan (because of the Elections DA) and in the status quo (because of the absence of the plan), it is an inevitability. It isn’t an avoidable cost for the judge when making a decision. Because the Election DA has another impact, the China war impact, external to the aff, it is an independent reason to avoid the DA and for the judge to vote for the neg. Having a way to capture the other team’s offense with your own scenarios is strategic as long as you are able to generate an external impact.

It is worth mentioning that although the two examples both end in the neg having an external impact, the better way to deploy this strategy is by doing what is done in example #3.1. Reading an external impact in the 1nc requires the 2ac to read impact defense to answer the DA which is an extra card they would not otherwise need to read. It also gives the 1nc the option to read impact defense on North Korea and see if the 2ac kicks the impact before the neg commits to reading an unnecessary additional impact card.

#### 4. Impact defense, the strategic necessity

Now that you understand the importance of reading an impact, it should be clear that it is equally important to answer impacts. In a debate between a scenario with no impact and a scenario with an impact, the scenario with the impact wins – it is the only one that matters. In most debates, both teams will read impacts. In order to win that your impact is the larger risk to avoid, you must mitigate the other team’s impact. There are different ways to do that, either by reading a Counterplan to solve some of the impact, or reading turns case arguments (that your impact causes their impacts, or that your scenario causes their impacts), but the most conventional way to answer an impact is to read impact defense to mitigate the impact.

#### Example #4.1: China impact with nuclear war defense

1ac Impact- US-China war causes extinction from nuclear weapons

1nc Impact Defense- nuclear war doesn’t cause extinction

In example 4.1, you have mitigated the impact to nuclear war. In this example, nuclear war defense is useful because the 1ac isn’t relying on a nuclear war impact, but in most debates, having such a general piece of defense won’t be strategic because you will more than likely be relying on a nuclear war impact or it will be easy enough to read one such that this isn’t as strategic as mitigating the impact in a more specific way.

#### Example #4.2: China impact with no war defense

1ac Impact- US-China war causes extinction from nuclear weapons

1nc Impact Defense- mutually assured destruction prevents China from going to war with the US

In example 4.2, you have mitigated in a more specific way the impact. This evidence is about China, and it is about whether China and the US engage in a nuclear conflict. You have conceded, in theory, that nuclear war causes extinction, but you have mitigated that US-China war will go nuclear.

Something important to realize is that doing simple things can significantly increase your chances of winning a given debate. As was clear from above, reading impacts alone increases your chances. Reading impact defense is similar. Imagine a scenario where you have an extinction impact and have read impact defense to your opponents extinction impact, but they haven’t read impact defense to yours. You win in this scenario because you have an unmitigated impact vs. a mitigated impact.

Following this logic, this should help you craft your strategies in debates. Imagine that the aff has read 6 impacts, and the neg has read impact defense to 5. As long as impact number 6 is external, the aff should extend that impact. It is a different version of the same scenario described above.

Not enough debaters capitalize on these two scenarios. Too often, debaters do not read impact defense, or extend impacts that the other team has read impact defense to when they have unmitigated impacts. It is important to realize that you only need one impact to win a debate. If you have an unmitigated impact external to the rest of the debate, and you have impact defense to every other impact in the debate, you have a clear path to victory.

#### 5. From impact mitigation to impact calculus

As discussed previously, a debate places the judge in the position of someone deciding between opportunity-costs – is a world in which the plan happens better than the status quo? The judge must make a choice, and therefore comparison of impacts is necessary in deciding who wins or loses a debate. Impact defense begins to establish arguments you can make to help the judge compare what is the more significant opportunity-cost, but explaining to the judge in the rebuttals which impacts are more important to avoid is essential.

#### Example #5.1: Nuclear terror

1ac- impact: nuclear terrorism causes extinction

1nc- defense: states won’t give terrorists nuclear weapons, terrorists cannot steal nuclear weapons, and terrorists cannot build them

impact: climate change

From 5.1, the impact defense helps set up the basis for comparing the two impacts. The neg could explain to the judge during rebuttals the follow: climate change outweighs nuclear terrorism. Climate change outweighs on probability – it is scientifically verifiable whereas nuclear terrorism is speculative because extraordinarily difficult to carry out. Impact defense in the early stages of a debate will help you make these kinds of comparisons in the late stages of a debate. Without you making those comparisons for the judge, the judge will either listen to the other team’s comparisons or make the comparisons on their own.

Another way of understanding impact calculus is thinking of the judge as a calculator assessing the percentages of arguments that a team wins in order to determine an outcome. For example, a team has an extinction impact with impact defense on it, the other team has an extinction impact with no defense on it, impact with no defense wins. 100% chance of extinction vs. anything less than 100% means 100% wins. The defense could be very weak such that there is still 99% chance of extinction with one impact. It is still a smaller risk of extinction. This simplifies what occurs in most debates, but this is foundational to understanding impact calculus.

#### Example #5.2: Nuclear terror vs. nuclear prolif, magnitude vs. probability

1ac- nuclear terrorism possible and likely in the near future, US security commitments fuels terrorism, nuclear terrorism causes extinction

1nc- DA: US security guarantee credibility is high, the plan undermines that credibility, that triggers nuclear proliferation, proliferation causes extinction

Case answers: nuclear terrorism not coming, economic conditions fuel terrorism, failed governance causes terrorism, ideology fuels terrorism, the plan won’t end all US security commitments

2ac- DA answers: nuclear proliferation won’t cause war

Example 5.2 is a scenario that arises in debates and is more complicated than 5.1. Here, there is only impact defense on nuclear prolif and no other mitigation to the scenario, and there is no impact defense on nuclear terror but there is uniqueness and link mitigation to the rest of the scenario. The question is, does the aff win? Or does the neg? Unless you tell the judge what assumption or guiding principle they should use to determine what impact to prioritize, they will use their default assumptions. There are several principles that are used for impact weighing – magnitude, probability, and timeframe are common.

One principle to resolve this debate would be for the judge to prioritize **magnitude** when assessing impacts. Magnitude prioritization just means that the judge votes for the largest impact. In terms of magnitude, nuclear prolif won’t cause extinction but nuclear terror will. Therefore, the aff wins. To add to the complexity, one could say that there is 100% chance of extinction if nuclear terror is to occur. There is mitigation to nuclear terror, and it could be major or it could be minor. The point is, the absolute certainty that if there is any risk of nuclear terror, extinction occurs makes it larger than prolif which no matter how likely it is to happen, it is uncertain to extinction. The degree of uncertainty makes it smaller. You could even take this argument to its logical extreme – there is only a 1% chance of nuclear terrorism being solved by the aff, but there is a 100% chance of extinction in that scenario. There is a 100% chance that nuclear proliferation will happen with a 1% chance of extinction. The aff still wins because of the certainty of extinction despite the unlikely nature of the scenario.

The same judge prioritizing the **probability** of impacts would vote neg in all the same scenarios. Probability prioritization means that the judge votes for the most likely impact. The sheer magnitude of nuclear terror isn’t sufficient to outweigh because the risk the aff solves it is so small, whereas nuclear proliferation is absolutely certain to occur and has a chance of causing extinction. Taken to its extreme, there is a 100% chance of that prolif will occur with only 1% chance of extinction, and the absolute certainty that prolif will occur outweighs the 1% chance that nuclear terrorism occurs, even if there is a 100% chance of extinction.

Timeframe is another principle for evaluating impacts. Preferring to avoid an impact that happens more immediately, or a shorter timeframe impact, is another way to distinguish impacts and is valuable because the timeframe for impacts are not necessarily all the same. Shorter timeframe impacts are important to avoid because we have less time to develop other ways to prevent them from occurring.

#### Example #5.3: Nuclear terror v. climate change

1ac- nuclear terror coming soon, plan stops terrorism, nuclear terror causes extinction

1nc- plan triggers climate change, climate change causes extinction

Imagine a climate change scenario where the impact occurs in 2100 versus a nuclear terror impact that is happening “soon.” You may not know when, but it will be before 2100. Because there is so much time between now and when the climate impact occurs, we have all that time to develop a solution to climate change whereas we have less time to develop different solutions to nuclear terrorism. Avoiding the more immediate cost should therefore be prioritized.

Rarely, if ever, are debates as cut and dry as the examples I have provided. Judges do not operate in the world of absolutes, and it is difficult to be convinced that there will be no risk something will occur. Judges are more likely to be convinced that the risk of something is so low that it should be disregarded or considered to be no risk, but it is not often that judges can be convinced that something is absolute. This is why concessions are so valuable – once a team has conceded something, it is taken as true. If an argument is contested, it doesn’t matter how much or how little, the judge is operating with uncertainty and in unlikely to conclude that a team is absolutely right or absolutely wrong about something posited in the debate, barring certain truths that we as a community have determined by consensus are absolute and that to contest them would be offensive (like racism being bad, sexism being bad, etc.). Given that most judges feel this way, even if you read impact defense, unless a team kicks the impact, there is always going to be some risk of the impact. The question is how much and if it is more or less than the relative risk of the other team’s impact, or what principle the judge should use to calculate which impact is more important.

Developing a guiding or operating principle for the judge to use when evaluating impacts is an aspect of argument resolution. Argument resolution is the concept that a debater should explain why they win to the judge. It is intimately linked to the concept of impact calculus because impacts are a piece of the debate that a judge will have to assess in order to determine which team wins. Argument resolution is also much more than just impacts because it is about how the judge should assess the debate as a whole, and debates are more complicated than an advantage vs. a disadvantage. But, impacts will always be a part of resolving debates because impacts are where teams generate offensive justifications for why they should win the debate.

#### 6. Why debate impacts end in extinction

Before moving on, many debaters wonder why there is a race, so to speak, to have an extinction impact. At one point, I heard a basic explanation of this – it is so the judge can compare apples to apples instead of apples to oranges. I think this is true to some extent. Consider the following:

#### Example #6.1: nuclear war vs. ontology

Aff- economic decline causes nuclear war and extinction

Neg- technological thought devalues human existence

Comparing survival to quality of existence as in example 6.1 is apples to oranges insofar as there is no common point for comparison. Just as was discussed in the impact calculus section above, the comparison of the two requires a bridge to explain how the judge should prioritize one impact over the other. Should a decision-maker prioritize existence, or the quality of that existence? If debate standardized the terminal impact as extinction, then comparison of the events causing extinction is easier.

#### Example #6.2(a): nuclear war vs. structural violence

Aff- economic decline causes nuclear war and extinction

Neg- economic inequality caused from neoliberalism is structural violence

6.2(a) runs into the same problem as 6.1. How does one compare structural violence to extinction? A bridge can help make the comparison somewhat easier for the judge so that the judge is no longer comparing unlike events.

#### Example #6.2(b): nuclear war vs. structural violence

Aff- economic decline causes nuclear war and extinction

Neg- structural violence from neoliberalism causes extinction

In 6.2(b), the difference between structural violence and nuclear war has been bridged, and apples can be compared to apples. 6.2(b) shows the insight that I think is more nuanced explanation of the apples to oranges analogy. In 6.2(a), a team could simply say- economic decline is certain to end all life, it outweighs structural violence on magnitude. And, this may be enough for a judge to vote for the aff. Whereas in 6.2(b), the team arguing structural violence as their impact cannot lose outright on a question of impact magnitude.

The ”magnitude” issue covers over an important truth about how debate has developed since nuclear war and extinction became a theoretical possibility. At some point, teams realized that extinction was the highest-possible magnitude of an impact, and that debates could be won on magnitude alone. The fact that human existence could end was categorically different from deaths, or even most of human existence dying. There are philosophical schools of thought about decision-making that debate about this, but on some level, debaters began to win on the sheer magnitude of extinction impacts, and the easiest way to prevent an impact from losing to another was to also claim an extinction impact. Either the other team didn’t do this and you could make the magnitude argument, or they did and you wouldn’t lose to it. And thus, a norm was created.

I use the kritik impacts above to make the point about apples and oranges clear, but the race to extinction happened for every impact. North Korean nuclearization could never outweigh US-Russia nuclear war unless North Korean nuclearization ended in extinction. Mexican state collapse could never outweigh US-China war unless Mexico state collapse resulted in extinction. An unfortunate consequence of the development of this norm is that certain impacts have received far less discussion than they should simply because those impacts do not end in extinction.

As can be seen by 6.2(b), argument innovation has pushed back against this norm either by working within the “extinction” framework or by challenging it altogether. This has resulted in debates over utilitarianism as a value, debates over whether human survival is important to value or even good, debates over life versus value to life, and debates over whose lives are valued when life is prioritized.

#### 7. What are small “i” impacts?

Small “i” impact is a term that isn’t necessarily used in argumentation theory, but is debate short-hand for it. At the most granular level, every argument should consist of a claim, warrant, and impact. A claim is the thesis of your argument, the warrant is the supporting evidence, and the impact is the significance of that argument. The process of going through these steps when preparing for debates is almost second-nature, and due to that it is overlooked, because it is a part of every single card you cut. Every single card includes a claim – the tag – and warrant – the text of the card. The impact of the argument is explained in the rebuttals once more of the debate has unfolded.

#### Example #7.1: economy uniqueness evidence

**Tag**- growth will recover in the fourth quarter

**Warrant**- evidence says industries reopening will drive growth

**Impact**- in a debate where you are winning uniqueness, you can make the argument in your rebuttal that uniqueness determines the direction of the link. The aff cannot win a link turn if the neg is controlling uniqueness, and there is only a risk that the plan will upset the possibility of a recovery in the fourth quarter.

Big “I” Impact is why a scenario is good or bad, and small “i” impact is the significance of the argument that has been made. Small “i” impacts are a general term whereas big “I” Impacts are the general term in a specific context. Although it can be difficult, it is important to consider the broader context of the debate and why components of arguments have significance. The more you are able to understand that, the easier it is for you to develop strategies before and during debates for you to put pieces together that amount to you winning.

#### 8. Argument resolution generally and how to win debates

Now that I have explained small “i” impacts, we can return to argument resolution because the two go hand-in-hand. Argument resolution is explaining the why – why does an argument matter, what is it’s significance, what does winning this argument mean in the scheme of the entire debate. It is also about more than a single argument and goes to why winning separate arguments in different parts of the debate means you win the entire debate. Here, consider whole sheets of paper, such as a disadvantage. What is the consequence to winning a disadvantage? What is the consequence to winning solvency? What is the consequence to winning framework? Importantly, the act of resolving arguments is sometimes called “impacting” your arguments, which ties it into the topic of this directional.

#### Example #8.1: Congress counterplan

1nc- Counterplan: Congress counterplan solves the aff

Net benefit: Congressional action decreases presidential powers, that’s good because presidential powers embolden the president to initiate accidental nuclear war

Resolving the counterplan can be quite consequential to the debate itself. If the counterplan solves all the case, what is the impact? What, if anything should the judge glean from that aspect of the debate? It means that even if the net benefit to the counterplan is very small, any marginal risk is enough to vote neg because the case is entirely mitigated by the counterplan. 8.1 is a simplified version of argument resolution (but also the benefit of a counterplan that solves the entire case). Argument resolution deals with relationship between arguments, and there are frequently more arguments in play.

#### Example #8.2: Links to the Net Benefit

1nc- Counterplan: Congress counterplan solves the aff

Net benefit: 2020 Election DA

2ac- Trump receives credit for congressional action

Again, another simplified scenario. If the 2nr extends the counterplan and net benefit, the 2ar only needs to win that one argument, that the counterplan links to the net benefit. It is one thing to say if there is no net benefit, the aff wins. The question is why? It is because there is not a unique opportunity-cost to voting aff, both the plan and the counterplan cause the disadvantage. In many cases, it is not strategic for a team to only make this answer in the 2ac because it means the aff is staking the entire debate on one argument. Although extending one argument may consist of a strong, simple 2ar strategy, the aff may not want to put all its eggs into that one basket so early in the debate.

While 8.1 and 8.2 are simplified scenarios, they are important to understand. Understanding the “why” of each argument, the significance of arguments in the broader context of the debate is critical to piecing together an effective rebuttal. Debates quickly become quite complex.

#### Example #8.3: NATO aff vs. Congress counterplan

1ac- NATO aff with NATO advantage and Trump miscalculation advantage

1nc- Congress counterplan with presidential powers net benefit, and then impact defense on both advantages

In 8.3, new questions arise for the 2nr and 2ar. If the 2nr extends the counterplan, will the 2n also need to extend impact defense to both advantages? Did the aff make solvency deficits for both advantages? If the neg is likely to win the counterplan solves all the NATO advantage, is it worthwhile to extend both advantages in the 2ar? If the 2nr does not extend impact defense to both advantages, which advantage should the 2ar extend? Not only do you need to answer these questions to piece together final rebuttals, but you need to explain why your decision to extend certain arguments amounts to you winning the debate.

#### Example #8.4: Japan aff vs. Congress counterplan

1ac- Japan advantage: Japan relies on US now, plan causes Japan self-reliance, Japanese security self-reliance de-escalates East China Sea conflict, East China Sea conflict sparks US-China nuclear war

Trump advantage: Trump ambiguity will cause miscalculation now, plan ends that, Trump foreign adventurism causes nuclear war

1nc- Congress Counterplan

2020 Election net benefit: Biden wins now, plan causes Trump to win, Trump win causes him to first strike Iran which causes nuclear war

Japan advantage: Japan security self-reliance growing now, US nuclear umbrella inevitable, interdependence prevents conflict in the East China Sea, mutually assured destruction prevents US-China war

Trump advantage: Trump ambiguity has been around for 3 years, plan only ends on instance, Trump can engage in adventurism even after the plan, history disproves foreign adventurism causes nuclear war

2ac-

Extends both advantages

Congress counterplan: perm do both, perm do the counterplan, counterplan is theoretically illegitimate, counterplan doesn’t solve either advantage, counterplan links to the net benefit

2020 Election net benefit: Trump will win, foreign policy will not flip the election, advisors check Trump from first striking Iran, first strike won’t escalate to nuclear war

The final rebuttals in 8.4 have many pieces to choose from. Will the 2nr continue to argue that the counterplan solves both advantages? Does it make more sense to argue the counterplan solves only one, and then extend impact defense on the other? What if the aff evidence on the Trump advantage is bad, but the link to the Election disadvantage is weak? Should the aff extend both advantages in the 1ar if the counterplan clearly solves the Japan advantage and instead kick Japan and extend theory? Or, kick Japan and read three new Trump will win cards on the disadvantage because the neg read 4 Biden will win cards in the block? If the aff could only read one uniqueness card in the 1ar, should the 2ar continue to extend uniqueness answers or should the aff focus on attacking the foreign policy link where the aff is stronger?

As you can see, complexity in debate spirals. And, in most debates, there will be even more argument added, increasing the complexity even further. The first step to argument resolution is understanding what sets of arguments you need to put together to win the debate. The second step is assuming that your opponent will be right on some issues, or that the judge will consider that your opponents win some arguments, and that under that assumption, explaining why the set of arguments that you have put together to win are still sufficient for the judge to vote for you.

While there is no right answer, as every debate will be different, you must resolve the debate for the judge. You must explain what the ballot should say, write it for the judge. The best judge decisions you can receive are ones that quote your final rebuttal. Impacting your arguments, or engaging in argument resolution, is difficult but necessary if you hope to influence the judge’s decision-making process.

#### Conclusion

Impacts as the classification of a debate argument, impacts as part of argument theory, and argument resolution are inter-related concepts that all attempt to explain the significance or value of arguments. Grasping the concepts of impacts and impact calculus and then being able to execute impact calculus and explain the underlying concepts will build into your repertoire of debate skills foundational notions of argument resolution. Learning to resolve arguments is the crux of debate, and mastering it will help you win many debates.