

# NCFCA LINCOLN DOUGLAS VALUE DEBATE PARADIGM

## DEBATE RESOLUTIONS

There are generally three types of debate resolutions: fact, value, and policy. NCFCA team debate uses a policy resolution. Because of this, the debate centers primarily on a policy that is evaluated by an implicit cost-benefit analysis or an explicit value and criteria. NCFCA offers resolutions in the same general topic area for both Lincoln Douglas and team debate, with a different type of resolution for each. Notice the clear differences between the following two resolutions.

### **Lincoln Douglas Debate Resolution (Value)**

*Resolved: That United States foreign trade policy ought to value human rights above national sovereignty.*

### **Team Debate Resolution (Policy)**

*Resolved: That the United States should significantly change its trade policy within one or both of the following areas: the Middle East and Africa.*

The LD resolution is a value resolution because it clearly states two terms that imply values: human rights and national sovereignty. The team debate policy resolution attempts to remove value laden wording so as not to skew the resolution towards a particular policy. The value resolution uses general terms that are value laden so that through their definition a conflict of values will occur.

## STOCK ISSUES PARADIGM FOR EVALUATING A VALUE RESOLUTION

The overarching goal for debating any resolution is clash – where the affirmative *supports* the resolution and the negative *opposes* the resolution. Based on this premise, many theories have developed regarding the respective burdens of the affirmative and negative. One way of defining these burdens is by choosing a specific theoretical paradigm. One of those paradigms is the stock issues paradigm.

“Stock issues” are simply the significant, important, or vital arguments in the round. The stock issues are based on the type of resolution (i.e., fact, value, or policy) being debated. As with a policy resolution, a stock issues paradigm is used to analyze a value resolution. However, these stock issues are very different from policy stock issues. The value stock issues should be viewed in light of their relationship to the value(s) being upheld in the round.

Value stock issues can be grouped into two categories: **definitive** and **designative**.

Argumentation and Debate, Austin J. Freeley, 1996

1. Definitive issues
  - a. What are the *definitions* of the key terms?
  - b. What are the *criteria* for the values?
2. Designative issues
  - a. Do the facts *correspond* to the definitions?
  - b. What are the *applications* of the values?

Regardless of the way a debater chooses to address the topic, he or she must adhere to the boundaries of the resolution. The resolution does not require the proposition of new legislation or a new policy. Debaters may choose to analyze existing laws or policies as application for their chosen values, but may not propose new legislation, policies or plans.

For the above example, the affirmative could support the restriction of national sovereignty because it somehow benefits a value premise defined as human rights. The negative could argue that restriction of national sovereignty does not benefit human rights or that there is a more important value premise that is negatively impacted by the restriction of national sovereignty. A value premise is the primary value identified by the affirmative or negative which he or she will be supporting in the round.

## **Definitive Stock Issues: Definitions and Criteria**

**Definitions** are the means for clarifying key terms in the resolution and the debate. Key terms include not only terms in the resolution, but also terms such as the value premise and criteria being supported. Some of the terms in the above resolution that may be important to define are: foreign trade policy, value, human rights, and national sovereignty.

When debating a value resolution, debaters often address the ideas and concepts upon which beliefs are based. Value terms like freedom, justice, security, and life are defined differently based on one's background and experience. When clash occurs between these ideas, a clear definition will help clarify the debater's position of advocacy for the opposing debater and the judge.

Each debater, whether affirmative or negative, must clearly define the value premise he chooses as the center of his position of advocacy. Definitions must also be agreed upon by both sides. Nevertheless, quality argumentation focuses more on the merit of the value being defined than on the definition itself.

**Criteria** are the mechanism for measuring the value premise. This means determining a practical framework for how the value premise is impacted by the case. For example, if the value premise being supported is *progress*, *technology* could be used as a criterion. This means that if you could show that the resolution promoted the advancement of technology, then the value premise of progress would be upheld. Think of the criteria ("criterion" in the singular) as the means to achieve a goal. If the goal is upholding the value premise, then the criteria are the road you will take to get there.

## **Designative Stock Issues: Correspondence and Application**

**Correspondence** means that both the affirmative and the negative have the burden to demonstrate that the arguments or facts provided in the case impact the value premise. This can be provided through analysis and the use of credible sources. For example, when discussing the subject of the rights of an individual, you may choose to provide your own analysis and/or quote William Godwin or Thomas Jefferson. In this way, you weave your own analysis and the analysis of credible sources into a position of advocacy for your case.

**Application** is the use of a value premise in a particular case area or example. At its core, this means showing how the value premise is practically applied, which can be achieved by showing the value's tangible or theoretical uses. This year's resolution defines the general area for application as foreign trade policy. The debater may choose to discuss any example or situation in the realm of foreign trade policy as support for his or her stated value premise. So, an affirmative could argue that existing trade sanctions in the Middle East are a restriction on national sovereignty, but that they protect human rights, which should be valued more highly. Or the negative may argue that, in relation to current policy on foreign food aid, the protection of human rights should not be valued above national sovereignty because it negatively impacts a more important value premise.

## THE LINCOLN DOUGLAS CASE

When it comes to the respective burdens of the affirmative and negative, there is a sharp difference between policy and value resolutions. In a policy resolution, the basic burden of the affirmative is to show a harm and solve that harm with a plan. The role of the negative is to show that there is no harm, that the plan does not work, or that there is a better way to solve the problem than the affirmative plan.

In a value resolution, by contrast, the basic burden of the affirmative is to show that a particular value is the most important value in the round and should be upheld, particularly when put in conflict with another value. This is also the burden of the negative, with the exception that the negative must advocate a different value. So, one of the basic differences between value and policy debate is that both teams, as opposed to just the affirmative, will be constructing a case to support their value premises.

There are many ways of constructing a Lincoln Douglas case. One of the most basic is to provide *definitions, value, criteria, and contentions* upholding the chosen value and showing its application. The following is an example of how a case might look.

### I. Resolution Analysis: Definitive Issues

General Definitions	Define the key terms.
Value Premise	Provide a value which will be upheld in the round.
Value Premise Definition	Define the specific nature and boundaries of the value.
Value Premise Justification	Provide reasoning and support for choosing the value and analysis on why it is the most important value in the round.
Criteria	Provide a mechanism for determining the relationship between the value and its application.
Criteria Definition	Define the specific nature and boundaries of the criteria.
Criteria Justification	Provide reasoning and support for the relationship between the criteria, the value, and the case.
Thesis	Summarize your position of advocacy.

### II. Case Proper: Designative Issues

Contentions	Provide points to correlate facts presented to the value and to apply the value.
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#### Basic Case Organization

1. Overview Contention Describe your value and basis for its worth.
2. Application Apply and correlate the evidence or support in the case to the value.
3. Exposition Weigh the impacts of the value.

What is noticeably absent from this case is a plan. In a value debate, the proposition of a new legislative plan or policy will not be used to uphold the resolution. Instead, the debate centers on the clash of values. Each side must identify which value is more important in the topic area provided by the resolution.

In a policy case there is often a concluding point that tallies up dollars saved and benefits bestowed on society. In a value case, a cost-benefit analysis is not as important as demonstrating that your value has been upheld and that it is the most important value in the round, based on its clash with another value as well as its application.