

## Rebuttals

Last week, you learned how to make an *impromptu speech*! As a debater, the kind of quick thinking that impromptu speaking requires is what is going to help you dismantle your opponent's case piece by piece. If you are the second speaker, your objective in the rebuttal speech is to poke holes in the argument that your opponent laid out. The objective of the rebuttal speech is to sift through cards that you have cut in order to find key pieces of evidence that you can present to negate the opponent's argument.

*Note: If you are the first speaker, this week's activities can still be beneficial to you! They can teach you important skills for your own speeches as well as to help your partner with writing his/her rebuttal in round.*

### TIPS:

- A good rebuttal should try to provide at least one piece of evidence that negates a point that the opponent makes.
- Try to follow the format of claim, warrant and impact.
- Be well versed with the cards you have; they will be crucial in making your rebuttal arguments stronger.
- Using direct sources of information will help improve your argument

The video below will review the tips in a little bit more depth as well as provide the thought process behind a good rebuttal speech.

<https://youtu.be/gKQ-3vV0g74>

### **Activity:**

There are actually two activities that will be helpful for learning how to write a rebuttal speech.

First activity: Now that we have outlined a case negating the resolution written, there will be 3 new contentions with a brief explanation for each affirming the same resolution (look at the next page). Try to spend 5-10 minutes researching the topic for blocks, then give a speech of at most 3 minutes rebutting the topic.

## EXAMPLE CASE: CREATE A REBUTTAL AGAINST THIS SHORT CASE

Resolved: High schools should remain online for 2020-2021 school year because of COVID-19

### Contention 1: COVID-19 risks the lives of students as well as family members if students are forced to return to school

This contention is arguing that students are at risk of catching COVID-19 when they are in close proximity to their peers. With many large public schools throughout the nation as well as the limitations these buildings have when it comes to allowing students to social distance in small classrooms, it is going to be problematic for students to be forced to return to class.

### Contention 2: Students or parents of students may choose to not return to school if it is not online

With many colleges and universities reaching decisions to bring students back to campus like the University of Pennsylvania, many students are considering taking gap semesters or gap years to ensure that they don't return to a campus where they are more likely to catch COVID-19. This similar pattern is going to be present in high schools. With many students and parents afraid of catching COVID-19, they may negatively impact student's education by not allowing the student to take part in class due to fears of catching COVID-19. By going online, this risk is mitigated and allows every student to stay safe in a time where a second wave of COVID-19 is imminent.

### Contention 3: Remaining online mitigates health risks towards teachers

Teachers in many school districts range anywhere from 22 to even 75 years old. The National Center for Education Statistics claims that 18.8% of teachers nationwide are at or above the age of 55 years old, and another 11.9% are within the age range of 50-54 years old. COVID-10 poses a proven significant risk towards people of this age group. A school cannot function without its teachers, so protecting them has to be a major priority for school districts across the country. By staying online, these teachers are much safer and allowed to still perform their job while still staying at home, where they are much safer from a deadly pandemic than a germ-filled school with thousands of students that pass through its halls everyday.

Second Activity: Think about a topic that you are very well versed about. This can be anything ranging from the argument about the greatest player in the current NBA (Lebron James vs. Kawhi Leonard) or something like which phone brand is superior (iPhone vs. Android). Take your own personal choice for which side you prefer and write out 3 points as to why it's better on a piece of paper. Then, take 2 minutes to write a rebuttal from the perspective of the opposing side. Give a 2-minute speech rebutting the 3 points you had previously written, using evidence that you know off the top of your head.