

FIRST OPPOSITION

First opposition is, in many ways, the easiest position on the table: it carries with it few technical requirements and so role fulfilment is easy (after all, we can all argue against something). This can also make it the most difficult: you get little credit for role fulfilment, the back half teams get more time to think about the motion and first prop decide what the debate is about.

Your goal is very simple: destroy the proposition so that first prop are beaten, second prop can't come back and second opp can't do anything more. Since this is, by and large, the most intuitive position on table a lot of what you should do is dictated by the specifics of the debate you're in. Remember that first prop want to solve a problem and make the world a better place, i.e. they have a problem, they want to solve it, they want to make things better; with this in mind:

1. Is there a problem?
 - Does the problem exist?
 - Does the thing first prop are banning cause the problem?
 - Is it a problem? Maybe it's a good thing.
2. Does prop solve the problem?
 - Is it feasible? Does it cost too much? [Avoid these in most debates]
 - Is it effective?
 - Does it target the right thing?
 - Does it help the people who are worst off?
 - Does it affect only the wrong people?
 - Can people get round it?
3. Does prop cause other problems?
 - Is it morally just?
 - Does it place an unfair burden upon some people?
 - Etc.

Remember that you don't have to disagree with everything the proposition says. If they dislike genocide, chances are you do too. The first opposition can wrong-foot the first prop: whilst there may be many different possible prop cases to run, once they've settled on one, you have many different opp lines available. You should be careful about this though, agreeing with them too much may give you little room to manoeuvre. Just as being bold in first prop can be well rewarded by judges, so can being bold in first opp. I don't recommend running crazy lines just yet, but be aware that if they run hard-line capitalism, then full-blown communism can be fun.

Counter props A word on counter props: DON'T COUNTER PROP. A counter prop is the introduction of a proposition, i.e. detailed change to the status quo, by the first opposition. By and large, these are unnecessary and only confuse the debate. If in doubt, avoid them; you should be very certain that a counter prop is the right strategy before you embark on one – if you make a messy debate by counter-propping you are likely to come fourth. This does not mean that the opposition have to blindly agree with every area of the status quo (if you think that 42-day detention is wrong but that we should spend more on counter-terrorism, then say so). Ultimately, you can what alternative measures are available, but the debate is about one policy and your job is to take that down; your job isn't to create a debate with two competing proposals.