


# **Cross Examination**

# The Basics

- ❖ Lasts 2-3 minutes, depending upon the tournament.
- ❖ You will sit down after giving your speech and cross examine the speaker after you. If you are last speaker, you will cross examine the first speaker in the round.
- ❖ You will be given pen/paper to flow your opponent's speech, but you may not bring notes with you when conducting the CX period.



# I'm going to forget my questions!

- ❖ When your opponent gets to their conclusion, start memorizing your questions.
- ❖ If you get stuck during the CX period, say something like “Your 3rd point said \_\_\_\_\_, right?” Then ask them a question about it.

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# How much does this matter?

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- ❑ You cannot win a round during CX, but you can lose it.
  - ❑ How well you **ask** CX questions is often viewed as a tiebreaker between similarly skilled speakers, but not using your full CX time may count against you.
  - ❑ How well you **answer** CX questions varies from judge to judge -- some people might drop you a rank for poor CX, while others will drop you to last place.
  - ❑ Judges who coach debate tend to prioritize CX more heavily in their rankings, but there are no hard and fast rules.

**Before asking any questions, always congratulate your opponent on an excellent speech.**

# Questioning strategies

To inflict maximum damage, attack your opponent's impacts or bring up important facts they did not consider in their speech.

Question any part of the speech that is vague or unclear - these are areas your opponent may not know much about.

If stuck, ask for specific, quantitative details about your opponent's evidence: "You said oil prices have dropped since 2012, but how much have they really gone down?"

Planning one question per point is an easy strategy but not required; my recommendation would be to hone in on the weakest point & tear it apart

**Keep your questions as concise as possible, while still trying to flex some knowledge**



# What if my opponent won't shut up?

This is a relatively rare problem in extemp. If it happens, smile as pleasantly as you can. Then say, "Thank you so much! I understand your answer." Do not wait for them to stop talking. Continue by saying, "what I really wanted to know about is..."



**Extemp Cross-Examination  
IS NOT like Debate  
Cross-Examination; don't  
spam them with questions  
or use jargon**

# Answering Questions

If you need thinking time, ask them to rephrase the question - even if you understood perfectly the first time.

If they demand a yes/no answer, but it's not a yes/no question, say "What an excellent question! It deserves a much better answer than just yes or no."

Never say "yes but..." because your opponent will cut you off. Put the qualifier **BEFORE** your answer.

## **Don't ramble**

- ❖ Some people try to give the longest possible answer in order to waste their opponent's CX time. This is a bad idea.
- ❖ Your judge will think you are being evasive, which implies you have something to hide.
- ❖ The longer you ramble, the more likely you will say something damaging.

# Exception

If you see the 30 second signal, try to use up the rest of the CX time. Many competitors try to sneak in a damaging question at the end of CX so that you won't have time to answer.

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# Question selection as defense

- ❖ Your first priority is to choose a question you can answer well
- ❖ If you have many good choices, consider taking something with one clearly correct answer:
  - Will Brexit be bad for the British economy?
  - Should transgender teens be able to use the restroom of their choice?
- ❖ Or choose something your opponent won't know about:
  - What is Eritrea's economic outlook for 2018?