

Cases Under Fire

Goal of Exercise: To help an Affirmative debate learn to defend their position in cross-examination.

Description: Pick a student (or have one volunteer) to read their 1AC in front of the group. All other students should be flowing, and thinking of questions for cross-examination. When the 1AC is finished, the students will all take turns cross-examining the 1A. It is fine for consecutive students to repeat, or rephrase, questions that have been asked earlier. However, students should attempt to ask as many unique questions as possible.

This exercise is first and foremost beneficial for the Affirmative debater. The thorough, and lengthy, cross-examination will reveal many of the 1AC's weaknesses. The lengthy cross-examination will also give the Affirmative speaker an opportunity to practice answering tough questions concisely and persuasively.

It is also helpful for those students who are asking questions. Students examining the 1AC will learn to ask deeper questions, as well as learning to make questions much clearer and more powerful.

Teacher's Note: The first-time students try this exercise, they may have trouble coming up with unique questions. Encourage the students to ask questions about every outline point (harms, advantages, each mandate, etc.), to help them think of new lines of questioning. In addition, try stopping each speaker (both questioner and questionee) if they are having trouble phrasing/ answering questions. Allowing speakers to rephrase or re-answer questions may also be helpful to help them learn the best approach/ strategy.

