

Thirty Second Summaries

Goal of Exercise: To help students explain their position clearly and concisely. To help students find the core message of their Affirmative.

Description: Students should imagine that someone on the street has asked them about their Affirmative case, and they have only 30 seconds to answer this stranger's question.

Exercise: Students summarize their Affirmative position (as presented in the 1AC). The debater has only 30 seconds to summarize their entire position. These summaries should provide a broad, but persuasive, overview of why the judge should vote for the Affirmative team.

Summaries should not simply restate the outline from the 1AC. Rather, they should go over a “big picture” perspective that is both concise and compelling.

Teacher's Note: Students will suffer from one of two problems when first trying these summaries. Either they will say very little, and not fill the 30 seconds, or they will take far more than 30 seconds to thoroughly explain their position. Students with short summaries would do well to recall all the outline points in their 1AC, and remember to work them all into their speech somehow. They should also discover the most appealing parts of their position and emphasize those points.

Students with lengthy summaries should practice consolidating points, and not spending too much time on any one idea. Finding a unifying theme (justice, preservation of life, upholding the constitution, etc.) might also help them to narrow their focus.

Thirty second summaries are a great way for debaters to become more familiar with their case and plan. They are also a great way to conclude Affirmative rebuttal speeches at a tournament!

