

Note Taking Seminar

By: Joanna Langille

1. The importance of good notes:

- being well organized is key to debating effectively.
- having good notes will result in a well structured and organized speech.
- allows you to never miss a point.
- helps you to follow and understand the debate.

2. Notes versus speech writing:

- DON'T write your speeches.
- written speeches are against the rules.
- written speeches will result in a stilted delivery and will prevent you from adapting to the direction of the debate.
- notes should be short; sometimes single words can trigger what you want to remember.
- writing out sentences during a debate is a waste of valuable listening time.
- changing speech writing into note taking takes time, the sooner you begin the better.
- allows you to develop as a speaker, no top level debaters use written speeches.

3. What do I write?:

a) the resolution.

b) what side you are on.

c) your platform.

- write down your team's position in a sentence or two, maximum.
- this will ensure that you and your partner both understand your case, and don't take it two different directions.

d) numbers!!!

- number EVERYTHING.
- this includes your points, your colleague's points, and all of the

opposition's points.

- if the other team doesn't number their points, do it for them. The judges will reward you.

4. Systems:

a) colours.

- assign different coloured pens to the different sides, rebuttal, questions, evidence.... the list goes on.
- this allows you to accurately track who said what.

b) them, us method.

- one page per team.
- write responses to various points underneath the corresponding argument.

c) they said, we said.

- divide your page in two, with "they said" on one side, and "we said" on the other.
- have another page with the labels reversed.

d) flowing a round.

- divide your page(s) into a number of columns that corresponds with the number of speakers in the round.
- at the top of each column, put the name of each speaker.
- have the columns labelled in the speaking order.
- this method allows you to see an argument develop and be refuted throughout the round.

5. Personal Style:

- these are just a few of the many, many note taking methods used.
- it's really important to find what works for you.
- try different things; don't get stuck taking notes a certain way just because you have always used that method.
- note taking should be tailored to the individual.