

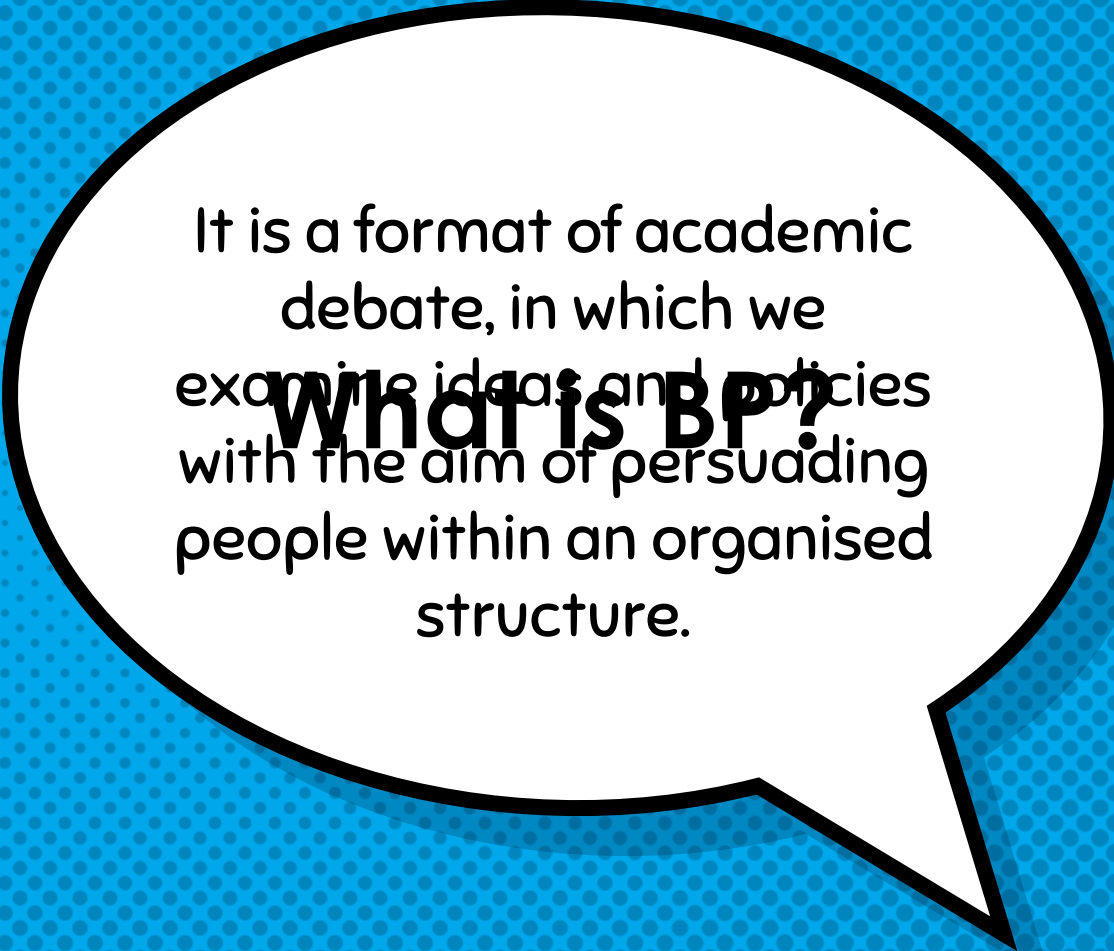
# Introduction to British Parliamentary Debating



# Hello!



This presentation was created for you by MGIMO Debate Club – a community of smart, creative and extremely nice people. Grab this chance to start a fantastic journey into the wonderful world of debates!



It is a format of academic debate, in which we examine ideas and policies with the aim of persuading people within an organised structure.

## What is BP?

# GOVERNMENT

ARGUES *FOR* THE MOTION



Team 1



Team 3

# OPPOSITION

ARGUES *AGAINST* THE MOTION



Team 2



Team 4

RANDOMLY SELECTED



PANELIST

CHAIR



PANELIST

# OPENING GOVERNMENT



- Prime Minister (1)
- Deputy Prime Minister (3)

# OPENING OPPOSITION



- Leader of the Opposition (2)
- Deputy Leader of the Opposition (4)

# CLOSING GOVERNMENT



- Member of Government (5)
- Government Whip (7)

# CLOSING OPPOSITION



- Member of Opposition (6)
- Opposition Whip (8)



**7 MIN**



**1 MIN**

**6 MIN**

**PROTECTED TIME (no POI)**



# What is a POI?

Point Of Information

=

short statement or question  
(10 sec max)

- ✓ Direct the POI strategically
- ✓ Stand up in unprotected time
- ✓ Wait until your POI is accepted/denied
- ✓ Keep POIs condensed but impactful

# How to read a motion?

- × THW (This House Would) – some kind of action needs to be taken
- × THBT (This House Believes That) – certain value/principle is worth believing in (as well as TH opposes/regrets/...)
- × TH, as X, ... – debating from the perspective of X
- × TH believes that ... should – whether it is good for the world (obligation, responsibility)



# Types of debates

## POLICY

- Debates where the Gov proposes a policy and the Opp opposes it

E.g. That we should tax inheritance

1. Is this policy fair?
2. Is this policy beneficial?

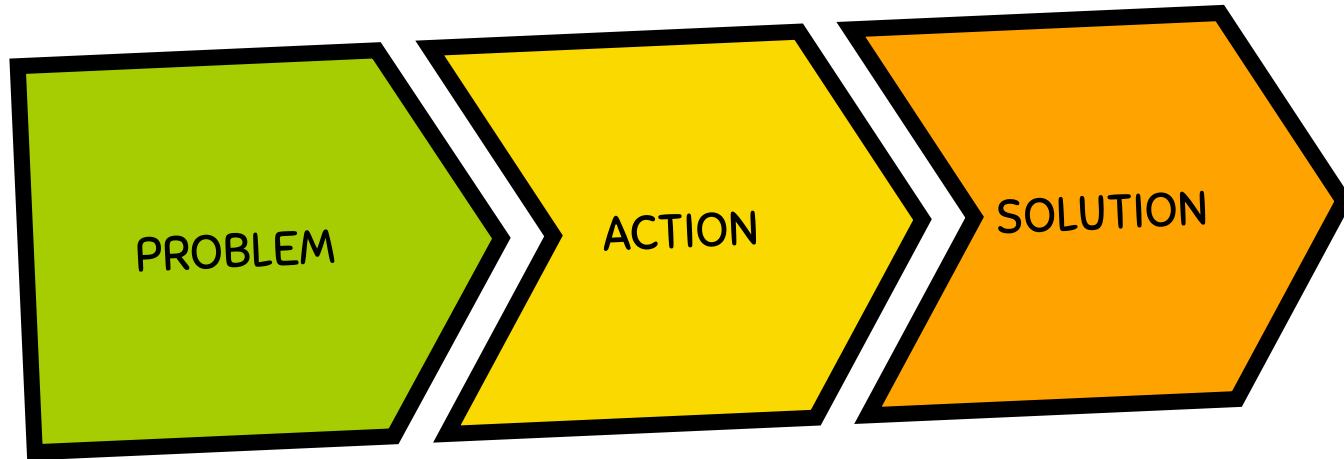
## PRINCIPLE/VALUE

- Debates where both teams evaluate the status quo

E.g. that we regret the invasion of Iraq

1. Which criteria do we use?
2. How should they be weighted?

# Forming arguments



# IDENTIFYING THE CLASH

Cigarettes are bad for health and should be banned

People should be allowed to make choices to do things which harm their health (e.g. living a certain lifestyle)

Cigarettes are addictive and affect your ability to make choices

People can quit smoking if they want to



Comparative: which side has more stakeholders / a more significant harm?



# Analyzing the problem

Is this a principle/ practical problem?  
Why is X a problem? Why is it important to  
solve X?



# What is the problem? (What is the harm?)

Prop: What is the problem with the status quo? What are you trying to solve?

E.g. Criminalization of drugs/drug use = unsafe use, black market and criminal activity

Opp: What is the problem with the motion/ prop's policy

E.g. Decriminalization = normalization of drug culture, more people take drugs probably unsafely

## PRINCIPAL

- × What values/ principles are we trying to protect?

E.g. Democratic rights, freedom of choice, expression, bodily autonomy, sanctity of life

- × Why is harm to these values so bad?

## PRACTICAL

- × Who is harmed? Think of the stakeholders
- × How are they harmed?
- × Why is harm to them so particularly bad?



- TH supports free trade in the developing world.

- **Logical Leap:**

- Developing countries are poor → Free trade will make poorer countries richer → We should support free trade

- **Step by Step Analysis:**

- Developing countries are poor → free trade means tariffs on goods are removed → industries in the developing world where they have a comparative advantage will not face unfair competition → will sell more goods and buy goods at lower prices → likely to become richer

# Action/Mechanism


- × How does your policy solve the problem?
- × What changes are likely to happen as a result of your policy?
- × How are the stakeholders you have identified likely to react to this policy?
- × Use small links and explain each step rather than having logical leaps
- × Use examples to show that your mechanism is likely to happen

# Solution

- × Link back to the problem/harm you have identified and how your policy creates a desired effect
- × What is the world under the policy likely to look like?
- × What are the benefits of this world? Why are these benefits so great?

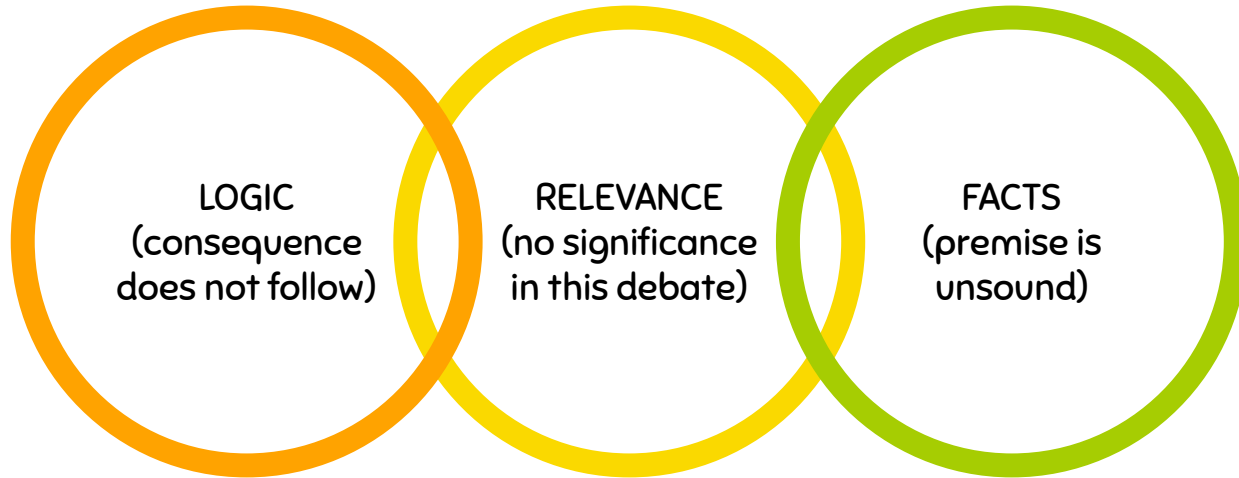
E.g. People get to live the lives they want in a safe, qualified way, likely to be free from addiction = access all other rights (stable job, education, family life)

- × Why is this policy the only way to achieve this?

A photograph of Donald Trump speaking at a podium. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a red tie. He has his hands raised in a gesture. Behind him is a blue backdrop with a white dotted pattern and a portion of the American flag. The text "Want to crush your opponent? Use rebuttal." is overlaid in white on the right side of the image.

**Want to crush your  
opponent?  
Use rebuttal.**

# Attacking an argument through its



Rebuttal will be usually a combination of the above



## OPENING GOVERNMENT

- Set up the debate:
  - ✓ Policy (if necessary/desired)
  - ✓ Aims, Target Audience, Mechanism
  - ✓ Limits of the motion/contextualisation
- Be comparative → try to pre-emptively react to closing/OO if their case is obvious or if it strengthens your case

## OPENING OPPOSITION

- Set up counter policy (if necessary/desired)
- Rebut OG
- Be comparative → try to show why your content is the most important (above anything CO could bring)

## CLOSING GOVERNMENT

- Make an extension:
  - ✓ New material not brought up by the opening tables
  - ✓ Extend on the material (crucial logical links missing in the opening)
- Summarize the debate from your team's perspective
- Do not repeat, state the point and develop the arguments made and add your own analysis of it
- Analysis should evaluate the arguments made → why yours are the best and why the other side is wrong/worse

## CLOSING OPPOSITION





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