**Writing a Contention for Debate**

**Speech & Debate I**

**Step 1: Introduce the Claim**

*Your first objective in a debate is to make your argument as clear as possible to your opponents, audience, and judges.*

*This is best accomplished by clearly stating the claim of your contention.*

**Ex: “My point of contention is that United States’ policies have increased the threat of terrorism abroad.”**

*You may also choose to include supporting notes or information to give context or explanation to your claim. These are often quotes or statistics that are not substantial enough to use as a full warrant, but still provide support for your claim.*

**Ex: “In fact, during the War on Terror our policies have led to a 16% increase in terrorism in the Middle East according to a 2008 CNN report.”**

**Step 2: Provide your Warrants**

*You must give at least one reason (likely more than one) why your claim is true, or why what you are claiming happens (or has happened).*

*This can be accomplished by first stating this reason, and then giving support for this reason. You will frequently need to rely on evidence for support.*

**Ex: “We can see that this is true by looking to the way U.S. policies have failed to solve the issues behind terrorism in the Middle East.**

**According to a 2004 report by the Secretary of State, the U.S. and our allies have focused efforts in the War on Terror solely on the organization Al-Qaeda. By focusing only on one group however, we are ignoring the issues that caused the problem in the first place.”**

*You may also choose to include some original analysis to make your warrant more clear.*

**Ex: “This is similar to stopping a burglar, but failing to lock your doors in the future. We are stopping the actor, but doing nothing to address the action.”**

**Step 3: Show the Impacts**

*You must show a reason (or reasons) why this claim matters. This is most commonly done by looking at the effects or results of your claim, or by using expert opinions on what could happen in the future.*

**Ex: “Because of these failed policies in Afghanistan, the CIA reported in 2007 that acts of terrorism have increased in neighboring Pakistan by 137% since 2001.”**

**Final Step: Link the Contention back to the Resolution**

*You should always remember to make clear to your opponents and audience how your argument supports your side of the debate.*

**Ex: “As this increase in terrorism clearly proves that U.S. policies have not reduced the global threat, I negate the resolution.”**

*You will likely be far more detailed in your own arguments than this example has been!*

**Sample Contention**

**Resolution: U.S. policies have reduced the threat of acts of terrorism**

**Side: Negative**

My point of contention is that United States’ policies have increased the threat of terrorism abroad.

In fact, during the War on Terror our policies have led to a 16% increase in terrorism in the Middle East according to a 2008 CNN report.

We can see that this is true by looking to the way U.S. policies have failed to solve the issues behind terrorism in the Middle East. According to a 2004 report by the Secretary of State, the U.S. and our allies have focused efforts in the War on Terror solely on the organization Al-Qaeda. By focusing only on one group however, we are ignoring the issues that caused the problem in the first place. This is similar to stopping a burglar, but failing to lock your doors in the future. We are stopping the actor, but doing nothing to address the action.

Because of these failed policies in Afghanistan, the CIA reported in 2007 that acts of terrorism have increased in neighboring Pakistan by 137% since 2001.

As this increase in terrorism clearly proves that U.S. policies have not reduced the global threat, I negate the resolution.

**Important Note!**

*The more detailed your evidence in, the better! It will lend you greater credibility in your debate.*

*You should* ***ALWAYS*** *include the name of your source and the publication date of your evidence*

*You may also choose to include relevant information about the author of the information, or about how the information was collected.*