ENTER THE ARENA: POLICY DEBATE

THE ULTIMATE ACADEMIC TEAM GAME



LOGIC, STRATEGY, AND THE FIGHT FOR A RULE CHANGE.

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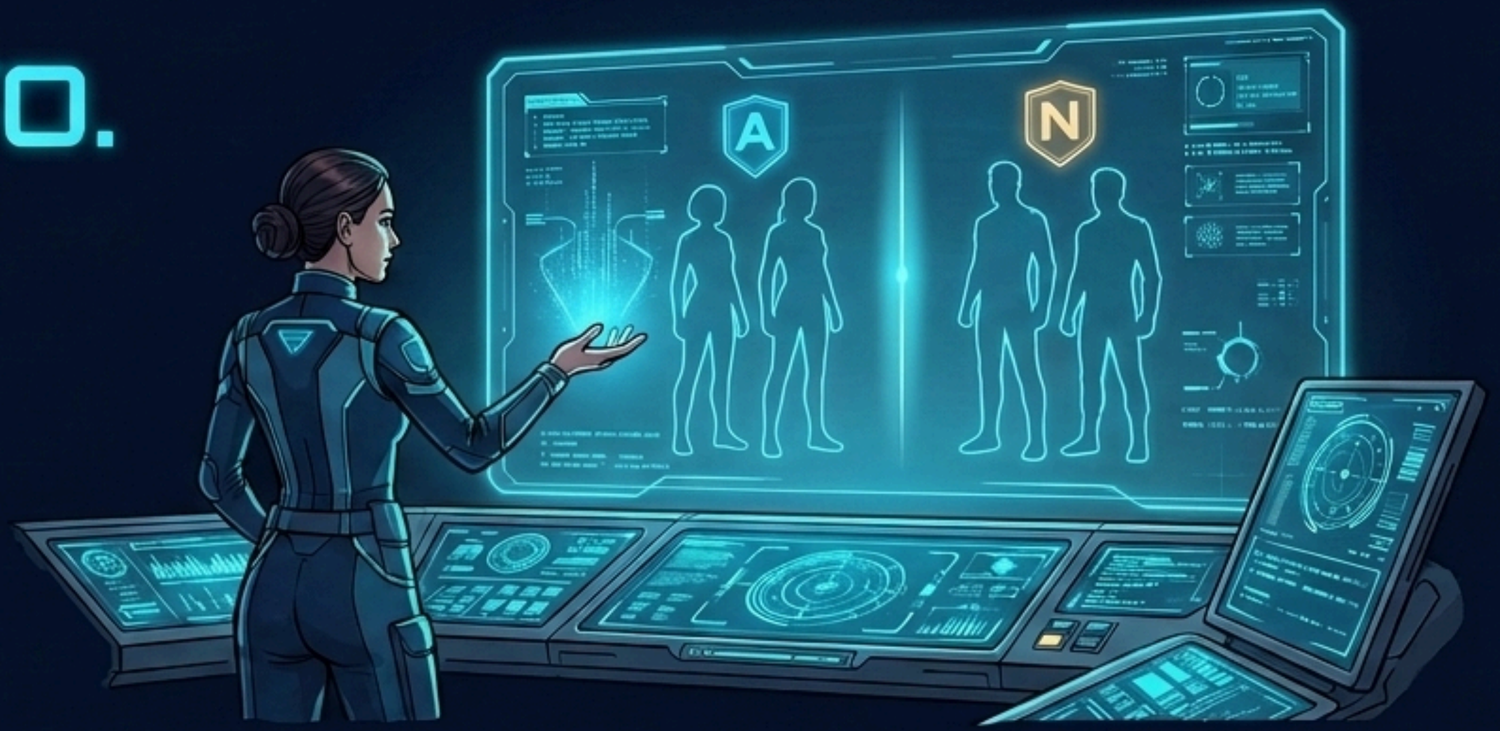
WELCOME ABOARD, CADETS.

Day 1 · Mission Briefing 01



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TWO ON TWO.



AFFIRMATIVE (AFF)

YES — this change should happen.

NEGATIVE (NEG)

NO — that change won't work / is a bad idea.

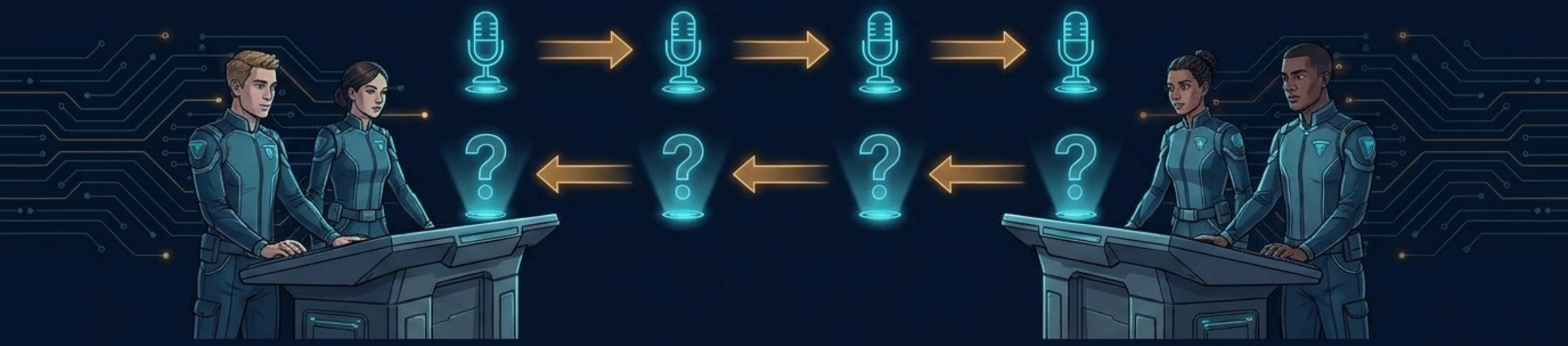
PARTNER

You + 1 teammate = your team.

Like a 2-player video game. You don't fly solo.

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EVERY CADET SPEAKS. EVERY CADET ASKS.



CONSTRUCTIVE

Build your case. (1st speech)

CROSS-EX

3 min asking + 3 min answering.

REBUTTAL

Respond + finish strong. (2nd speech)

ROUND

~90 minutes, start to finish.

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8 MINUTES TOTAL

You and your partner share the bank. You decide together when to spend it.



Like timeouts in basketball — but the whole team's clock.

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The Matchup: How the Game is Played

Policy Debate is an **academic team game** where **two sides compete** by arguing over a **rule change** proposed for the entire country.

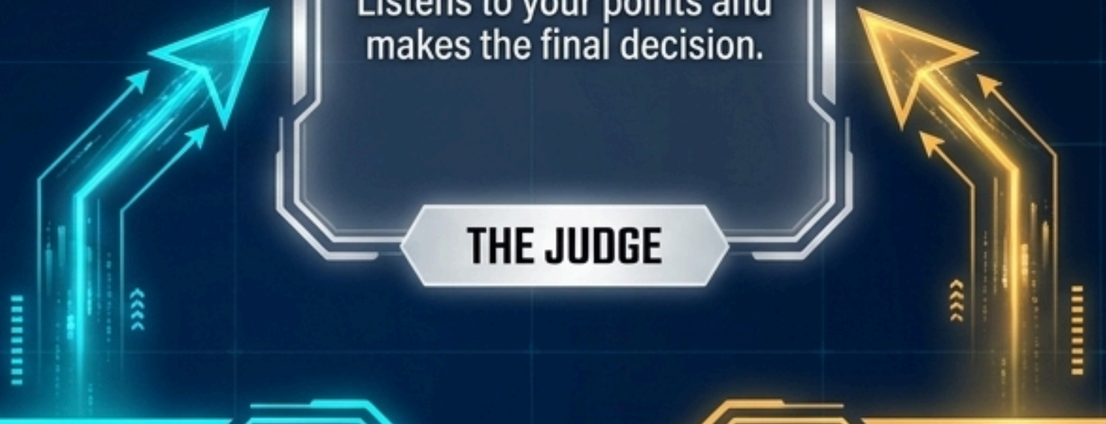


You don’t fly solo. Two teams, with two people on each team, compete against each other using logic and facts.

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THE REAL-WORLD BRIDGE: CONVINCING YOUR PARENTS

It is like when you and your brother or sister try to convince a parent to change a house rule—like letting you get a dog.



YOUR PARENT

Listens to your points and makes the final decision.

THE JUDGE

YOU + YOUR SIBLING

Working together to change the current rule and bring in a puppy.

THE AFFIRMATIVE (AFF)

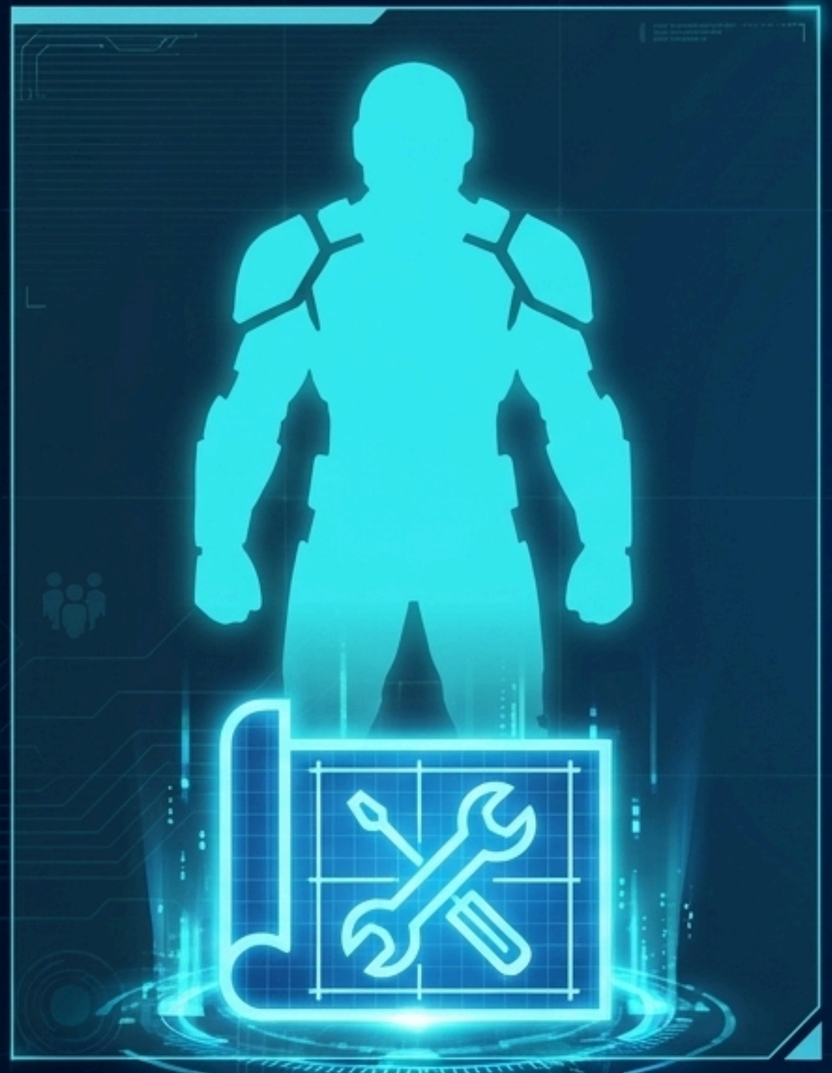
THE OPPOSING THOUGHTS

A dog costs too much money or will ruin the furniture. Wants to keep the house rules exactly the same.

THE NEGATIVE (NEG)

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Player 1: The Affirmative (Aff)



Character Stats

The Goal:

YES to the rule change. They support the proposed rule change.

The Mindset:

Things need to be fixed. The Aff team wants to change the rules to fix a big problem.

The Action:

They must present a specific plan to clear up the issue. Without a plan, they are just complaining!

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Player 2: The Negative (Neg)



Character Stats

The Goal:

NO to the rule change. They argue against the Affirmative's plan.

The Mindset:

Keep things the same. They defend the way things are right now.

The Action:

Their job is to stand up and prove that the Aff plan is a bad idea, will cost too much, or will cause brand new problems.

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The Decider: The Neutral Judge

You are never trying to convince the other team to agree with you.
You are trying to convince the Judge.



- ☑ Listens to all sides fairly.
- ☑ Signs a ballot to decide who wins based on who made the best arguments.
- ☑ Watches the round and keeps track of the points.

⚠ **Pro-Tip:** Eye contact matters! Look at the judge, not the opposing team.

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Check for Understanding: The Cell Phone Scenario

Imagine the official topic for debate is...
Resolved: Our school should ban cell phones during lunch hour.

Question: Which team is the Affirmative, and which is the Negative?

Team A

"Banning phones is excellent because students will talk face-to-face and stop cyberbullying during lunch."

Team B

"Banning phones is dangerous because students won't be able to call their parents if there is an emergency."

Get ready to lock in your answers...

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Poll Results: Who Are You Supporting?



(They want to change the rule to fix the problem of cyberbullying).



(They want to keep the current rules, pointing out the new problem of emergencies).

Who are both teams trying to convince to win the round?

THE JUDGE!

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