

# Understanding the Resolution



**THE IMPORTANCE OF  
WORDING**

# Step One: Define important words



**Resolved: Violence is a justifiable response to oppression.**

# Violence



1. To be violent
2. Physical force intended to hurt or damage someone or something
3. Abusive exercise of power
4. Strong emotion or expression; profanity

# Justifiable



1. Possible to justify
2. Due or deserved
3. Morally right and good; righteous
4. Based on sound reasoning; reasonable

# Oppression



1. Cruel or unfair treatment
2. The feeling of being heavily weighed down in body and mind
3. Abusive use of force or authority
4. To take away a person's rights

# Step Two: The Subject



**What is the subject(s) being evaluated?**

- **Definition: The topic being debated or controversial issue in the resolution.**
- **Ask yourself: What is the thing that we are deciding is right, just, moral, beneficial, etc.?**

# Example



**So, what is the subject(s) in our example resolution?**

**Answer:**

**Violence**

# Be Careful!



- During a robbery, a homeowner should be allowed to use deadly force against the criminal.
- What is the subject?

**deadly force**



# Step Three: Type of Resolution



**Is the resolution comparative or noncomparative?**

- **Definition:**
  - ❖ **Comparative** – argues two subjects against each other. Both may be good, but the topic is asking which is better. Ex. Vanilla is more delicious than chocolate.
  - ❖ **Noncomparative** – argues pros and cons of one subject. Is it good or bad? Ex.: Vanilla is delicious.
- **Ask yourself: Has the negative been given a subject to defend or is the negative only attacking the affirmative?**

# Let's look at some other resolutions...



- **Noncomparative: *Dogs* make good pets.**
  - ❖ **One subject: Dogs**
  - ❖ **Negative side only has to attack (give reason to reject the topic) or prove the topic false.**
  
- **Comparative: *Dogs* are better pets than *cats*.**
  - ❖ **Two subjects: dogs vs. cats**
  - ❖ **Negative side has to defend a subject or show their “world” is better.**

# And Some More...



- **The criminal justice system ought to focus on rehabilitation.**
  - ❖ What is the subject(s)?
  - ❖ Answer: **rehabilitation**
  - ❖ So is this comparative or noncomparative?
  - ❖ Answer: **noncomparative**

# What about this one?



- **The criminal justice system ought to prioritize rehabilitation over punishment.**
  - ❖ **What is the subject(s)?**
  - ❖ **Answer: rehabilitation vs. punishment**
  - ❖ **So is this comparative or noncomparative?**
  - ❖ **Answer: comparative**

# Example



**So, is our example resolution comparative or noncomparative?**

**Answer:**

**Noncomparative**

# Step Four: Limits



**In what context is the subject placed? Or, what are the limits on what you have to defend?**

- **Definition: The boundaries on the topic. These are the only conditions you are required to argue in the round, but you may have to point that out to your judge.**

# Let's look at some other resolutions...



- **Resolved: Vigilantism is justified when the government has failed to protect the people.**
  - ❖ What is the subject?
  - ❖ Answer: **Vigilantism**
  - ❖ Comparative or noncomparative?
  - ❖ Answer: **Noncomparative**
  - ❖ What context limits the subject, in this case vigilantism? Or, to put it another way, vigilantism has to be defended only under what conditions?
  - ❖ Answer: **when the government has failed to protect the people**

# Example



**So, what is the context of our example?**

**Answer:**

**oppression**



# Why does context matter?



**Violence only has to be defended in the situation of oppression, not as a general concept.**

**This is SUPER important! Why?**

# Step Five: The Evaluation



**What is the evaluative term?**

- **Definition:** The word or phrase that will be used to judge the subject. This usually takes the form of the verb clause in the sentence.
- **Ask yourself:** What am I trying to prove about the subject?

# Example



**So, what is the evaluative term/phrase in our example?**

**Answer:**

**justifiable**

# Step Six: The Main Actor



**Who is the agent of action? Is the agent explicit or implicit?**

- **Definition: The person, group, or organization that would carry out the resolution in the real world.**
  - ❖ **Explicit: Directly stated in the topic. We are clearly told the actor.**
  - ❖ **Implicit: The actor isn't directly stated but is suggested by the topic or implied.**

# Example



**So, who/what is the agent of action in our resolution?**

**Answer:**

**The person or group being  
oppressed;  
the ones using violence**

# Example



**Is the agent explicit or implicit?**

**Answer:**

**Implicit**

# Step Seven: Others Involved



**What other actors would be involved or effected?**

- **Definition: Other people, groups, or organizations that might feel the impacts of the primary agent.**

# Thinking deeper...



**When a person breaks the law, the agent of action would be the criminal.**

- ❖ **Who else does the criminal potentially impact by his/her actions?**



# Example



**So, who are the other actors impacted by the primary agent in our example resolution?**

**Answer:**

- ❖ **The oppressor (one hurting the agent)**
- ❖ **What about third parties?**

# Step Eight:



Think about the function of every single word!

It is especially important to pay attention to every adjective!!!

Resolved: Violence is a justifiable response to political oppression.

Resolved: Violence is a justifiable response to oppression.

# What if we made this change?



**Resolved: Violent revolution is a justifiable response to political oppression.**

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# One final change...



**Resolved: Violent revolution is a justifiable response to political oppression.**

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# Now It Is Your Turn!



## Directions:

- Complete the resolution analysis activity in groups of four.