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
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.?
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.
The criminal justice system ought to focus on rehabilitation.

- What is the subject(s)?
  - Answer: rehabilitation
- So is this comparative or noncomparative?
  - Answer: noncomparative
• 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.
Resolved: Violence is a justifiable response to political oppression.
Resolved: Violent revolution is a justifiable response to political oppression.
Resolved: Violent revolution is a justifiable response to political oppression.
Now It Is Your Turn!

Directions:

- Complete the resolution analysis activity in groups of four.