

## Glossary of Terms

This document is intended for teachers and coaches whose students are competing in the ACT Debating Competitions. Follows is a brief glossary of terms.

### **Comparative**

In essence, debating is a comparison between the world the affirmative team stands for and that which the negative team stands for. It is not enough for the negative team to argue the benefits the affirmative team asserts will accrue is unlikely to accrue; the negative team must also demonstrate there are harms associated with the model the affirmative team supports.

Consider the motion [that we would raise the legal drinking age to 21](#). It is not enough for the negative team to argue that those aged 18 – 21 will be able to procure alcohol illegally, and thus render the model ineffective. In addition to this, the negative team must demonstrate why a world in which those aged 18 – 21 consume alcohol illicitly is more dangerous than one in which it is legal for them to do so.

Negative teams do not necessarily have to support the status quo. Where reasonable, the negative team may propose a counter-model. In this instance, the negative team may concede that teenagers drink irresponsibly under the status quo, but argue the solution to this problem is education and increased parental supervision. When this happens, the comparative is between the affirmative's model and the negative's counter-model.

### **Mechanism**

A mechanism is the way in which the benefits of the model accrue. Consider the motion [that we would have affirmative action policies for women in parliament](#). The affirmative team may argue:

- There are not enough women in political office (problem)
- If we enact this policy, more women will stand for political office

Because of 3 mechanism:

- Women are more likely to be elected to political office
- Those who are elected under this policy act as role models for other women, and encourage them to pursue a career in politics
- Those who are elected under this policy demonstrate women can be effective leaders, and thus engender respect for women in general

## **Actor**

An actor is an individual or a group who performs an action. Consider the motion [that the West should intervene in Iraq](#). If the affirmative team proposed that the United Nations and the US military invade Iraq, both the UN and the US are actors in the debate. The Iraqi government and ISIS may also be actors.

## **Stakeholder**

A stakeholder is an individual or a group who is affected by the action proposed by the motion. Once again, consider the motion [that the West should intervene in Iraq](#). Stakeholders include the citizens of Iraq, the citizens of the United States, the soldiers involved in the fighting, and the governments of both nations.