INTRODUCTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS IN DEBATE

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General characteristics:
• **They should be short.** You do not want to use a lot of time on them, nor do you need to for them to accomplish their goals.
• They should be relevant to the subject matter, not some strange analogy that entertains you.
• They should be appropriate for the subject matter – no story about your little sister’s eating habits during a debate about torture.
• **They should have a conceptual connection to the other introduction and conclusions in the speeches of your team in the debate.** This needs to be planned, but if you do it well it make you look more like a team that works together that has a coherent and unified message.
• **They should be planned and scripted, not an afterthought.**

Introductions:
• You want to get the attention of the audiences. Nothing happens unless you have their attention. Too often audiences do not really tune into your speech until 20 or 30 seconds into it. You want their attention right away.
• You want to orient them to a common characteristic of your presentation in the debate, perhaps a principle you are defending or your team line. This is a chance to reinforce a message that is central to your advocacy.
• You want to make them interested in listening to the rest of your speech, a “teaser” that makes them expectant.

Conclusions:
• You want to use your conclusions to enact a summary function for the debate, especially in the later speeches. It should all come together in your conclusion.
• You want to cover something that you really want them to remember. Often your conclusion should contain the most critical idea that your team has expressed.
• You can use your conclusion as a call to action, unity and commitment to the ideas you have expressed. The audience can become a way to join you in supporting your advocacy.
• **Your conclusion needs to be timed, and you need to start it at the appropriate point in your speech.** If it takes 20 seconds, you should begin it with 20 seconds left.