SUMMARY SPEECHES IN DEBATE

Alfred Snider, World Debate Institute, University of Vermont

PURPOSES

• Summarize the debate: Boil it all down to the bottom line for all major issues.
• Crystalize the main issues: Make the most important issues and ideas stand out.
• Create the situation where your side wins: Narrate a decision rule that you would want to hear from a listener, but do so using the issues, not the playing pieces of the game.
• Locate tipping point argument and win it: There are almost always one or two key ideas in the debate that make all the difference. It is hard to teach you how to find the tipping point, but you should always be trying, and grasp opportunities you see. Identify and win the tipping point.

STRUCTURE

• Between two and four major points, clearly labeled and identified with titles. Introduce them early in your speech and then go through each one.
• Structure probably new and does not mimic three major arguments for each side.
• Combine similar issues into one major point, for example, everything to do with individual rights would go under one main heading.
• Inside of each major point you need steps in explanation.

FUNCTIONS

• Highlight your best issues in a credible but flattering way.
• Recall impact claims for major points, compare with other side.
• Let the little stuff go. Win the big issues.
• Put on that “we are winning this debate” show without saying that, but framing it through the people you argue on behalf of. Hear the cry of the sufferer whenever you can.

STYLE ELEMENTS

• Time allocation can be a problem, divide your speech into components.
• Replay the best lines your side has spoken in the debate.
• Show confidence in the job done by your team.
• Quick introduction.
• Conclusion should be a sort of exhortation.

VIDEOS

Serban Pitic
https://vimeo.com/26047997
Debbie Newman
https://vimeo.com/6073933

Maja Cimerman
https://vimeo.com/5759652