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The following lesson plan is the result of the joined effort of an international team of trainers. Their focus is to improve quality of debate training. Therefore, an important part of this endeavour is the feedback users provide.

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## Lesson plan – Rebuttal I

### A. Goal of the lesson

The goal of this lesson is to give an overview of rebuttal and teach the student how to do rebuttal effectively.

### B. Activities

#### Lecture (30 min)

You should cover these key issues:

- What is rebuttal and why should one use it?
- How do build rebuttal?
- What and how can be rebutted?
- How to prioritise rebuttal?
- Layers of rebuttals (comparative and non-comparative rebuttal)

You can use knowledge from these chapters and workshops:

- [Simon Quinn’s “Debating”, Chapter 2](#)
- [Novice Rebuttal \(By Milla and Milos\)](#)
- [Nice lecture by Owen Mooney](#)

#### Exercise (15 min)

Come up with example arguments and rebuttals and ask students to choose methods that to use to rebut these arguments. Discuss and analyse why these approaches were taken and what could have done.

You can find example arguments at the end of this document (part “F. Theory”).

## C. Preparation

Try to go through all the materials suggested for the lecture part of the lesson. You can also prepare some slides if you want, since it is efficient way to make people remember key points of the lecture (an you also have something to share with them).

There are example arguments at the end of the document, but it is even better to come up with your own ones. You can, for example, use some arguments from the last tournament you attended, so it is easier for students to come up with rebuttals.

## D. Hints

Lively discussion be ready to share your own ideas and explanations, if the group is not keeping up the discussion

## E. Verification

After every part of the exercise, try to keep lively discussion about how rebuttal could be better, more efficient. At the end of the lesson, try to gather opinions of student on how understandable the lesson was and if there is anything you have to clarify. You can use some questions to make students to sum the content up, like:

- What is rebuttal in debate for? Why is it important?
- What types of rebuttal do you remember?

## F. Theory

### Example situations for the exercise:

#### **Example 1:**

Motion: THBT Estonia should replace conscription with professional army.

You are in opposition.

The proposition has made an argument saying that professional soldiers are able to protect the county when Russia is going to attack. These soldiers are constantly ready for the attack, they have better training and they are more motivated. Therefor they can respond faster and more effectively.

*Professional soldiers might be ready to respond fast, but the amount of professionals Estonia can afford might be too small. A small army will be easier to Russia to conquer before the NATO forces come to help. We the resistance to last as long as possible, therefor we need as many people having the knowledge to fight back.*

#### **Example 2:**

Motion: THW ban wearing burkas in public places.

You are in opposition

The proposition has made an argument claiming that this motion would release Muslim women under the oppression of men. As men no longer can force women to cover themselves in public places, women would understand that men shouldn't dictate their life and therefore they would have more liberty and self-actualisation.

*The proposition argumentations stand on a premise, that women only wear burkas because men tell them to. In reality though, they wear them in their free will, to follow their religious traditions. The women who are pressured and forced into wearing burkas, would under the side proposition be forced to stay indoors, meaning their liberty would be infringed even further.*

### **Example 3:**

**Motion:** THW allow cars that are used by the maximum number of passengers drive on the road lines meant for public transportation.

You are in proposition.

The opposition argument is: If cars have an opportunity to use public transportation lines, they will start doing that. If there are many cars in the bus-lines, the public transportation will slow down and therefore people would have less motivation to use public transportation that is more environmentally friendly. If people use their own cars, the harms done to the environment will be larger.

*The people currently using public transportation don't own a car, therefore they are unable to switch their means of transportation. And the people who use cars as their main way of transportation, dislike public transportation and would never use it, regardless of how fast it is. So, the only opportunity to reduce the harm done to the environment is to create incentives for the car drivers to use one car instead of 4 or 5.*

### **Example 4:**

**Motion:** THBT former colonial powers should return the cultural heritages to the country of origin.

You are in opposition.

Proposition has made the following argument: In the Western museums, the value of the art and heritage is small, because this has been moved from the right cultural context and people can't fully understand it and what the art might mean to the indigenous people. Therefore it should be given back.

*The museums have experts who can understand the history and background of the cultural heritage. Moreover, Western countries have more know-how and funding to conduct more research into the artefacts. If these artefacts are given back, the value they have to the society will decrease.*

### **Example 5:**

**Motion:** THBT prisons should be in private ownership.

You are in proposition.

The argument from side opposition reads: Retrenchment will lead to deterioration in living conditions in prisons. As the main goal of a private enterprise is to make profit they will look for any possible way to reduce the costs and therefore the living conditions will go down. As the prison is in the position of authority towards the prisoner, it has the motivation and opportunity to ruin the basic rights of the prisoner, such as providing cheaper and less nutritious food. Therefore, giving prisons to private enterprises will reduce the human dignity of the prisoners.

*Retrenchment exist in status quo as well as most of prisons are state owned. National budget has its limits and the electorates are not fond of coshering the prisoners. Private companies might have more motivation to assure prisoners well-being due to regulations and supervision.*