

## LESSON 5: **FRAMEWORK**

### TOPIC:

In this lesson, students will gain an understanding the role of the framework in Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

### Essential Question + Objectives

1. Students will be able to explain the role of the value and criterion.
2. Students will be able to construct an outline of a mock framework.

### MATERIALS:

- Pencil and paper
- Whiteboard or blackboard
- Dictionaries (optional)
- Computers (optional)

### RESOURCES:

- *Sample Negative Constructive*

### Insight:

Frameworks in LD “frame” how the debate will be understood—both by the debaters and by the judge. Strategic use of framing can help win debates, but comprehension of the basic function of a framework (*and its several elements*) is essential for all debaters hoping for a chance to win. More broadly, understanding how to evaluate claims according to standards promotes critical and impartial thinking, removing students from the emotivity of arguments and focusing their attention on how we can objectively assess arguments’ relative strength.

## ONE-DAY LESSON

## HOOK

5 minutes

Pose the following debate resolution to the class:

| “The public’s right to know ought to be valued above the individual’s right to privacy.”

As an entry slip, ask the students to answer the following three questions on one side of a sheet of paper:

- What terms do we need to understand in order to debate this topic?
- What is this resolution asking the affirmative (*the debater supporting the topic*) to prove? Specifically, how do we know if something “ought” to be the case?
- What values or principles are in tension/conflict in this topic?

## BODY

30-40 minutes

Introduce the term “**framework**” to the class.

| *The framework is analysis which tells us two things:*

- *What does the resolution mean?*
- *What is it each debater’s job to prove in the round?*

A framework generally consists of four elements:

- ▶ **Definitions**
- ▶ **Observations**
- ▶ **Value**
- ▶ **Criterion**

Debaters can disagree on Definitions, Burdens, Values, and Criteria, in which case they should often argue for why theirs are best.

Instruct the class that not all words in a resolution need to be defined—only define those words that do not have an obvious meaning in the context. There is some wiggle room in choosing which terms need to be defined, and debaters can often reasonably disagree. That being said, there are often also terms that are so vague or crucial that it would not be reasonable to choose not to define them.

Ask the class to share what terms they thought needed to be defined when they did their entry slips.

The class should identify these terms as needing definition:

- ▶ **Public’s right to know**
- ▶ **Ought**
- ▶ **Value**
- ▶ **Individual’s right to privacy**

In particular, it will be important to define:

*“Public’s right to know” because this term is unclear. We also probably want to define it as a phrase (which is how it appears in the topic) rather than as a sequence of individual words.*

*“Ought,” as it is the evaluative term. We are evaluating what we ought to do, and therefore need to know what “ought” means..*

Next, explain to your class that observations are brief analyses of the resolution. They may be more detailed, definition-like analyses that bring clarity to the topic, and/or they may be analyses of the burdens in the debate. A burden is what it is the debater’s job to prove based on the topic.

Ask your class how they answered the second question on the entry slip. This was getting your class to think about burdens. If they say something like, “it’s the affirmative’s job to show that the public’s right to know is more important/beneficial/good,” challenge them to explain how we decide if something is more important/beneficial/good. This will feed into the criterial discussion later.

“Ought” is the evaluative term, meaning debaters are meant to evaluate what “ought” to be done. It is generally on the evaluative term that burdens hinge. Suppose we define “ought” as expressing moral obligation. With this change, it seems like it is the affirmative’s job to prove that there is a moral obligation to value the public’s right to know above the individual’s right to privacy.

Next, explain to your class that the **Value** is the highest good in the round. If the resolution is asking us whether we have a moral obligation, we might value Morality. Since we would ultimately have to show a moral obligation to win the debate, Morality seems like the highest good in this context. Ask the class what other values might be implicated by this topic. Some good answers might be:

- Democracy (*we are talking about the quality of public discourse*)
- Quality of Life (*we are talking about invasions of privacy*)
- Freedom (*we are talking about rights and speech issues*)

## LESSON 5: FRAMEWORK

Some common values are:

- Morality
- Justice / Fairness
- Freedom / Liberty / Autonomy
- Human Dignity
- Governmental Legitimacy
- Societal Welfare
- Equality
- Life
- Quality of Life
- Democracy

Next, explain to your class that the **Criterion** is the way in which we—in the context of the resolution—access or achieve the value. For example, if you have a criterion of Treating People with Dignity, and a value of Morality, you are saying that we can achieve morality by treating people with dignity. We can think of a criterion as either (*or both*) a gateway or measuring stick. If treating people with dignity is a prerequisite to morality, then treating people with dignity is a gateway to morality. You cannot be moral without passing through this gateway. If treating people with dignity is a barometer of morality, then we can measure the “moralness” of an action by how well it treats people with dignity. In this view, treating people with dignity is an important element of morality, so that we can estimate an action’s level of morality by gauging how much that action treats people with dignity.

Importantly, the criterion gives us a way to compare the affirmative to the negative. We can ask, “who protects individual rights best,” to see who better achieves the value, and therefore who wins the debate. Therefore, a debater’s arguments must connect to and matter under their criterion. This is because the Criterion is also the standard by which we measure the importance of the arguments in a debate. If the criterion is treating people with dignity, but the debaters only talk about how their points affect governments, then their arguments don’t matter or “weigh” under the criterion. Since the criterion tells us how we are going to achieve the value, if the debaters cannot present arguments that matter per the criterion, they cannot connect their arguments to their value. Judges generally vote for the debater who connects most/best to the value through the winning criterion.

Ask your class what kind of criteria we could have for the sample resolution. Is there a clear connection between the suggested criteria and the value (*there needs to be*)? Some good answers might be:

- Promoting a Healthy Democracy
- Promoting Social Welfare
- Enhancing the Marketplace of Ideas
- Protecting Individual Rights

Finally, explain to your class that the framework matters. If we are measuring the importance of arguments with a Criterion of “protecting individual rights,” we are going to be less concerned with the overall benefits of prioritizing the public’s right to know and more concerned about how the public’s right to know impacts our personal rights. Conversely, if we are measuring the importance of argument with a Criterion of “promoting social welfare,” we are going to be less concerned about the loss in personal rights and more concerned about the overall benefits of the public’s right to know. This could be a huge factor in how a judge picks a winner.

**CLOSURE**

5-10 minutes

Have each group refocus on the resolution discussed in the hook (e.g., “the public’s right to know ought to be valued above the individual’s right to privacy.”)

**EXIT SLIP:**

Have students flip their entry slips over to use the back as an exit slip.

- Using dictionaries or the internet, if available, have students define these terms. If dictionaries or internet access are not available, have students give their best guess as to the meaning of these terms.
- Then, have students identify three possible values for this topic (*at least one for each side*) and three possible criteria (*at least one for each side*). Have the student explain why they chose the values and criteria they did.

Collect the entry/exit slips at the end of class.

**CONTEXTUALIZING:**

For contextualizing this lesson, it is recommended that you ask your class to read the “*Sample Negative Constructive*” as homework so that they can see how a framework is written in an actual case. Ask them to answer the following questions after reading the case:

- How does the criterion connect to the value?
- How do the contentions connect to the criterion?
- What is the evaluative term in the resolution the case is debating? (*Answer: morally justified*)
- What was the strategy behind how the negative chose to define the terms in the topic?
- Were there any other terms the negative should have defined? (*Answer: probably civil disobedience*)