

## The Kritique

- Purpose:
  - The purpose of a critique is to attack the fundamental assumptions made by the affirmative team. The assumption can have been made by chance or because the affirmative is forced to defend the resolution.
- Short Example:
  - Some policy language has hidden racism in it. For example, an argument against welfare might contain racist language. The negative will point out the hidden racism and why that fact alone is a reason to reject the plan.
- Definitions:
  - Assumption:
    - This is the part of an argument that people think is true (assume to be true), but never expressly prove it to be true.
- Two examples of possible types:
  - Language Kritique:
    - The assumptions are revealed by the language used to make claims and arguments. Use of the word “He” to talk about all people.
  - Philosophical Kritique:
    - The assumptions are revealed by the way one claims to know something. Your idea is flawed. (example below)
- Process to Attack Assumptions:
  - Ok, so we know that a critique attacks the assumptions made by the affirmative team and why those are bad, but what is the process to actually attack those assumptions? There are three steps to doing this.
    - First: Identify the assumption and exactly how it is revealed, by language of philosophically.
    - Second: Explain how the assumption links to the critique. Show why the assumption is bad. Use of word “he” marginalizes women.
    - Third: Explain the implications of the critique, basically what the impact of the critique is. In our example, dehumanization of women.
- Possible Impacts of the Kritique:
  - There are three possible impacts of the critique.
    - First: You can show that the plan doesn’t prove the harms
    - Second: You can prove the plan is unable to solve
    - Third: Show how the critique creates new impacts
  - This sounds like a DA
- Pre and Post Fiat
  - Ask about fiat power
  - The assumption that in order to decide the desirability of an alternative future, we first have to imagine that it exists.
  - In a round there are two mindsets: pre-fiat, before the plan exists, and post fiat, after the plan exists.
  - Post Fiat

- The mindset that most think of when they talk about policy debate. This is the realm in which DAs and CPs are argued. Basically you discuss the merits of the plan.
  - Pre Fiat
    - The mindset that some issues need to be resolved before we actually discuss the merits of the plan. “He” example: the affs use of the word “he” in round affects me, and that needs to be resolved before we discuss the plan. You are asking the judge to vote on the merits if what happened in round.
  - Kritiques can be argued in both the pre and post fiat mindsets. The sexism example we were talking about would be a pre-fiat critique. But it’s also possible to argue critiques in a post-fiat mindset.
- Example: Testing:
  - Affirmative Harm: Students don’t learn as much as they use to because test scores are lower than in the past.
    - Negative Kritique: Challenge the assumption that test scores are a reliable measure of student achievement. This challenges the assumption that test scores provide useful information. If test scores are unreliable, then the affirmative cannot prove the harm by proving test scores are low. (ex: Test scores do not reveal accurate information of students achievement, therefore scores cannot be used to prove students are underachieving.)
  - Affirmative Solvency: Testing should be used to guide curriculum changes to enhance student learning.
    - Negative Kritique: If tests are unreliable, then using test results to revise the curriculum is a wasted exercise and will not achieve the goal of improving student achievement.
  - Impact of the Negative Kritique: Once you prove that test scores are not a measure of a student’s ability you can extend that to say test scores in fact only test whether a student is a good test taker. Therefore, increasing or making tests more rigorous will only serve to perpetuate racism and sexism in education. The judge should reject any plan that promotes or increases sexism or racism.
- The Value of Kritiques:
  - Highly Generic: The resolution always makes critical assumptions such as who should act, how the policy should be implemented, why a particular area is important, ect.... The critique is general enough to apply to a large variety of cases.
  - Multiple Consequences: They minimize the affirmative advantage while providing an argument to weigh against that advantage.
  - Prior Implications: The critique must be resolved before the substantive issues of the debate. In our example, the negative could argue that racism and sexism are so evil that they need to be avoided absolutely. Testing

should be rejected regardless of any substantive benefits testing many provide.

- Shifts Debate: Using a critique shifts the debate to the negative ground. Instead of debating something the affirmative has spent unlimited amounts of time preparing, you will be debating on your ground. In effect, you get the home-field advantage.
- Answering Kritiques:
  - Debate the critique: Philosophers get into arguments just like policy makers do. If you know what critiques might be run against you do a little research beforehand and find some evidence that answers the critique.
  - Use Cross-X time: Ask as many questions as possible. Make sure you know what the critique is saying. If the other team can't or doesn't explain the critique, the judge will be less apt to vote for it.
  - Specific Affirmative Answers: The critique is very general, but your evidence is specific to your case. Show why your specific proof outweighs any generalizations.
  - Argue Uniqueness: The critique talks about harms already in the status quo, and thus the plan only marginally increases those harms. Argue that a marginal increase in harm does not merit rejection of the plan
  - No Alternative: Ask what the alternative to the plan and present system is. If there is no alternative, stress the uniqueness argument. If there is an alternative, argue that it is a bad alternative (Use counter-plan arguing techniques)
  - Attack the idea of critiques: Make the negative explain why philosophical arguments should be considered in round when the goal of policy debate is to educate people as policy makers.
  - Use your brain: Attack the critique in a logical way, using your own evidence and perhaps life experiences to refute what the negative is saying.