

## Common Cases

"Common cases" are the underlying cases that can be applied to groups of resolutions, even if the resolution is worded differently or on seemingly different topics. A way to find the common case is to make sure that you are looking at the big picture, not just the small details of the debate. The big picture will be considered the main theme, and will lead to the common case that needs to be debated.



Common cases range from sociological cases like life and equality, to political cases like democracy and human rights and to scientific cases like research. Once you have found the common case of the debate a few times, it becomes very apparent what you are looking for. If you are looking for activities for club meetings, try working through each of the important common cases: identify the typical case line and arguments.

- Individual freedom versus group security
  1. Position 1 – the individual has the right to make choices that are the best for him or her. Society must not interfere with the choices a person makes.
  2. Position 2 – A society must protect itself. If individuals threaten society, the rights of the group are more important.
  3. Common resolutions: Locker searches, Terrorism, Censorship
- The ends versus the means
  1. Position 1 – How we do things is the most important factor in judging if what we did was good.
  2. Position 2 – What happens at the end is more important than what you do to make it happen
  3. Common resolutions: Euthanasia, War time choices, Spanking
- Rights versus responsibilities
  1. Position 1 – The most important issue is what you can be free to do without other people interfering
  2. Position 2 – The most important issue is what you should do instead of what you can do
  3. Common resolutions: Environmental issues, Foreign Aid, Role of the press
- Majority versus minority
  1. Position 1 – The majority of people decide what the group should do, and the minority must follow what the majority says
  2. Position 2 – The minority must be protected from the control of the majority
  3. Common resolutions: Multiculturalism, Aboriginal self-government, Integration
- Legal versus ethical
  1. Position 1 – We must do what the law says we should
  2. Position 2 – We should do what we know is right
  3. Common resolutions: Civil disobedience, Gay marriage, Environmental issues
- Control versus natural evolution
  1. Position 1 – We should plan how to meet our goals and change things to meet our plan
  2. Position 2 – What will be will be, and we should not interfere
  3. Common resolutions: Economic issues, Environmental issues, Welfare
- Cost versus gains
  1. Position 1 – We should do the thing that costs us the least
  2. Position 2 – We should do the thing that gives us the most benefits
  3. Common resolutions: Capital Punishment, Health care, Gun registry

Continue to add to the list as you discover other common cases and their typical resolutions. See pages 48-49 *Step-by-Step Guide*.