

Past the package

Sometimes you will debate against a team where all you can do is go "Where did they find this information?" and sit in a stunned silence when they bring up examples from around the world into your debate. What these teams did was go well beyond the package to do research and incorporate it into their debate.

How can you do that and where do you go to look?

Look at what you know: Start from the top. What do you know? Expand on it. Chances are you may be knowledgeable in one section...but how much do you really know? Do you just watch the local news and read the local paper? Or, do you watch BBC news and read the Economist? Research. Read. Watch. Look for sources beyond the obvious. These are the only ways to know more about the topic at hand.

Look at who you know: Good teams use their connections and go beyond the research package. They talk to their parents' colleagues. They interview people like professors at the University that are experts in the subject they're debating on. They might interview someone who works with immigrants when they debate immigration. They stay active in the community and talk to as many people as possible about the debate topic.

Look at how far your knowledge reaches: Good teams look at what is happening in their city or community and then automatically expand and look at it from a worldview. Something in Saskatchewan could be happening in Ireland and good teams will be able to show you that link about the how's and why's. It's not exactly hard to do this, but it can be quite difficult if you do not spend time building your knowledge base outside of what you learn in school or read in the package.



Look at how hard you work: Good teams work at being good, they do not just magically acquire the knowledge while they sleep. These teams read, talk and research and most of all they put in the time to become good debaters. They are always working on cases, even if it is not a topic on the schedule. Just because you put in twenty minutes on a speech does not mean that every team did. Some teams will have prepped on the bus, while others will have put in several hours each week.

What you know and how much you know is up to you!