

# How to use your evidence

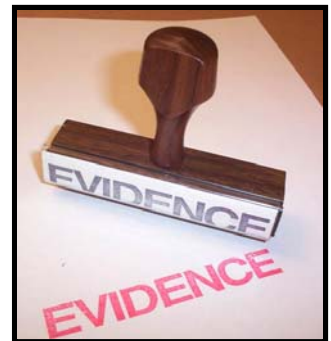
Be aware of the temptation to distort truth for your own purposes. Responsible debaters do not falsify facts, do not present a few facts as the whole story, do not present tentative findings as firm conclusions. They do not **plagiarize** and/or **present the ideas of others as their own**.

Be aware of factual errors in both your own speeches and those of your opponents. Make sure you have correctly copied down the information, and that the information is from a reputable source or can be verified by other sources. Be sure the evidence you use actually supports your case, and is not a generalization or suggests a connection when there is none.

For every argument you make (think LEET) you should have at least 3 pieces of evidence to back up each part of the argument. You will likely only use one piece the first time you present the argument, but you and your partner need to be prepared to offer further supporting evidence if you have to rebuild an argument.

You need evidence to explain and support your ideas. When using evidence, be sure not to take quotations out of context, not to juggle numbers or statistics, and not to present unusual cases as representative examples. Use sources of information that are objective and qualified and cite them appropriately.

Evidence can take many forms: Statistics, Studies, Statements by authorities, Quotations, Examples, and Illustrations.



Strive to use a variety of evidence throughout your case. Present just a few numbers, slowly and carefully - use vivid comparisons for striking and memorable impact. Establish the importance and relevance of your authorities and use clear and definite quotes. Several familiar examples leading to the same conclusion can support a case.

Citing your sources are important for at least four reasons: Verifiability, Acknowledgment, Examples, Context. — **Mark Stoneman** in [Do You Link to Your Sources?](http://www.blogcatalog.com/community/do-you-link-to-your-sources/) ([www.blogcatalog.com/community/do-you-link-to-your-sources/](http://www.blogcatalog.com/community/do-you-link-to-your-sources/)) Above ideas were adapted from [How to Become a Better Blogger 1](http://onecoolsite.wordpress.com) at [onecoolsite.wordpress.com](http://onecoolsite.wordpress.com)

Citations should be a seamless part of your overall presentation, briefly mentioning the speaker and source (opponents and judges can always ask for the exact citation if they doubt the source):

"According to Doctor so and so in a recent 2009 McLeans article on ..."

"Popular blogger so and so sums up the public feeling at his blog [www.ihavetheideas.com](http://www.ihavetheideas.com), that are relevant to this debate..."

While some context is necessary, do not get caught up in long, awkward citations:

"For my next piece of evidence, I am going to quote Doctor so and so, who has three degrees in this subject and is quoted in numerous places, including the April 30<sup>th</sup> Volume 23 issue 5 of McLeans Magazine, a weekly Canadian publication, on page 15 of the article entitled, "Being an expert on everything" in paragraph 10, written by award winning Ms. Journalist..."

Do state if you are paraphrasing or quoting directly, or just referring to their ideas. Finally, the evidence does not stand alone. It must be used to support an argument. Evidence is not a substitution for arguments, but does help validate an argument. Explain how the evidence does this. What is the relationship between the evidence, your arguments and your case as a whole? Tell us!