

## **Argumentation**

Within the WSDC format, the strength of your arguments is one of the main criterion that judges take into account when adjudicating a debate. An argument is in essence nothing more than a reason in favor or against a topic.

Not all arguments are equally strong, so what determines the strength of an argument? When evaluating an argument, judges mainly look at two questions:

1. To what extent do I believe that the argument is true?
2. How relevant is this argument in the debate?

To make sure that every argument encompasses the two elements mentioned above, it might be good to use an argumentation model. The model proposed below is just one of the many models students could use.

1. Statement
2. Context
3. Analysis
4. Illustration
5. Relevance

### **Statement**

With your statement you tell the judges what the argument will be about. So your statement is a one sentence summary of your argument. Imagine you're against the motion "alcohol should be banned" and you want to prove that the past has shown that a ban increases the size of the black market. Then the statement could be::

In this argument I will show why banning alcohol will create a black market.

A statement always consists of two parts

- A) The change that the motion brings about
- B) The impact of that change

In our example the would be "banning alcohol"

In our example the impact would be "the creation of the black market"

Here's an other example:

*Stelling*: THW introduce a maximum income

*Argument tegen de stelling*: People will be less motivated to work

- The change: introducing a maximum income
- The Impact: less motivation to work
- The statement: This argument will show why introducing a maximum income will decrease people's motivation to work

### **Analysis**

After you told the judges what you want to prove (your statement) it's time to show why your statement is true. So ask yourself: why is my statement true? Or with our example Why will banning alcohol lead to a black market. When answering this question, try to substantiate your argument as much as possible by making every thought you have explicit. By doing so you create a sound line of reasoning

So don't say:

Banning alcohol will lead to a black market because people still want alcohol.

The analysis above is not sufficient because it still leaves a lot of questions unanswered. It's for example still unclear why they want alcohol so badly that they are willing to break the law. Moreover it's unclear why people will take the risk to sell the alcohol as well as why the government can not just regulate the black market. To come up with so called "link" it could help to first develop the argument schematically. An example of this can be found on the next page. To make your argument even more plausible you can add examples and evidence.

### **Relevance**

After you've explained why your argument is true it's time to explain why your argument is relevant for the debate. Ask questions like "why is this argument so important in the debate" or "why is this impact good/bad". When answering these questions keep in mind that every answer needs to be substantiated.

Statement

A) Banning alcohol

People still want to consume alcohol because they grew up with it and will therefore underestimate the harms of alcohol

**Voorbeeld:**  
This why people that don't yet reached the legal drinking age still buy alcohol

Because a lot of people want to consume alcohol but are not able/willing to produce it themselves, there will be a market for the production of alcohol. Especially since the the prices that can be asked are relatively high since people have no legal place to go to

**Voorbeeld:**  
We see the same thing happening with the black market for drugs

It is hard to regulate this since it's easy to produce alcohol secretly

**Voorbeeld:**  
As we saw during the prohibition in the US

Analysis

B) The creation of a black market

Why is a black market bad

Money flows into the criminal circuit

no way to guarantee the safety of the alcohol

Relevance