## Quick guide for CARD critics

**A CARD critic is an educator, not merely an umpire fairly determining winners, because the CARD critic has two additional and more important responsibilities:**

1. Teach students how to improve their arguments and advocacy

2. Nurture a learning environment that sustains student participation

**1. ARGUMENT & ADVOCACY**

The central question is whether a world with implementation of affirmative advocacy is better or worse than one without.

EVERY TEAM: Must debate the current CARD topic <https://www.westerndebateunion.org/topics> . While students can present any argument, including appeals to common, personal, and scholarly knowledge, only evidence from documents in the community library <https://www.westerndebateunion.org/cardlibrary> may be cited directly.

AFFIRMATIVE: Must meet a burden of proof by offering clear and convincing arguments their topical advocacy is a necessary and sufficient response to the problems they outline.

NEGATIVE: Must meet the burden of rejoinder by refuting and undermining the specific case offered by the affirmative.

CARD CRITIC: The CARD critic is an educator - a critic of argument - tasked to help students understand how to improve their arguments and advocacy. Incomplete, incoherent, or inconsistent “arguments” do not constitute arguments, whether or not they receive a response. Critics should teach debaters *why* weak arguments are weak and *how* they could be improved. Critics should focus feedback on the arguments and ideas presented by students. Critics must help create an atmosphere of civil inquiry, learning, and belonging. Critics should announce the winner of a debate and explain their reasoning. **Critics must BOTH submit an electronic ballot** using their Tabroom.com account **AND complete the CARD speaker evaluation form.**

CONSTRUCTIVE SPEECHES: Initiate any argument germane to the topic

1st Affirmative (1AC): 6 minutes, present a topical case for change

1st Negative (1NC): 6 minutes, present arguments against the affirmative case for change

2nd Affirmative (2AC): 6 minutes, address negative arguments and develop the 1AC

2nd Negative (2NC): 6 minutes, develop arguments against the affirmative change

REBUTTAL SPEECHES: Focus attention on important arguments; no “new” arguments

1st Negative (1NR): 4 minutes, crystallize arguments against the affirmative case for change

1st Affirmative (1AR): 4 minutes, crystallize arguments for the affirmative case for change

2nd Negative (2NR): 4 minutes, explain why the world without the affirmative is better

2nd Affirmative (2AR): 4 minutes, explain why the world with the affirmative is better

CROSS-EXAMINATION: 3-minute cross-examination after each constructive. The 1AC is questioned by the 2NC, the 1NC by the 1AC, the 2AC by the 1NC, and the 2NC by the 2AC.

PREPARATION TIME: Teams have 5 minutes of preparation time to use outside speeches and cross-examination.

**2. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

The highest responsibility of debaters and critics is to create and maintain an enriching and welcoming educational environment that respects each person and encourages their participation and learning about argumentation, advocacy, and the topic. While this is a shared responsibility, critics, as educators, should judiciously intervene to help nurture such a learning environment. Successful CARD critics teach students how to improve their arguments and advocacy through quality feedback. CARD critics teach students where and how they should improve while helping them appreciate that it is in their capacity to improve. Poor critics leave students dejected, feeling unwelcome, or confused about how to improve.