

Creating a Contention with Narration

In order to win your debate round, you will need to present reasons to your judge as to why your interpretation of the resolution is best. We use the Claim, Evidence, Warrant style of argumentation (sometimes called P.E.A. or point, evidence, analysis).

1. Decide what your overarching contention (big argument will be)
2. Find evidence which proves your overall argument
3. Start building

Most arguments need a “narrative” so that your judge can understand what you are trying say. Often the narrative requires some background information, then some reasons why your argument is correct (evidence) and then analysis as to how it affects the overall debate.

Read the evidence that you’ve been given and try to create your contentions within your first speeches using a narrative.

Here is an example:

Contention 1: Joining UNCLOS is necessary for the US to develop seabed mining (*big argument*)

(*background explanation*) Because we are not members of UNCLOS, the US does not have legal status for seabed mining.

(*evidence*) According to Horace Robertson in the 2008 Journal for International Law Studies, “If the US does not become party to the Convention, international recognition of the rights of the US licensed businesses could be jeopardized.”

(*explanation*) Which means that US businesses are dissuaded from pursuing seabed mining because they don’t know if it is legal for them to do so.

(*evidence*) According to a 2009 article in The Economist, “Commercial miners want both a clear title to their holding and exclusive rights to exploit it.”

(*transition*) Additionally, if our US businesses can legally mine the seabed, it will be incredibly good for our economy.

(*evidence*) Brian Howard wrote in 2016 in National Geographic, “There is enough gold on the seafloor to give every person alive nine pounds, scientists estimate. That would be worth about \$150 trillion, or \$21,000 a person.”

(*analysis*) So that means if the US joins UNCLOS, it would clear up the legal uncertainty related to deep seabed mining, encouraging American businesses to invest in and participate in that mining, which would be an economic boon for US citizens.

Now You Try

Contention 1:(big argument)_____

(background explanation) _____

(evidence w/ source)_____

(explanation) _____

(evidence w/ source)_____

(explanation) _____

(transition)_____

(evidence w/ source)_____

(analysis)_____