



Practice Strategies

Eric Qian - March 2025



Everyone has different practice strategies that work for them, so feel free to try different practice strategies and see what works for you.

Practice like you play!

Especially the week of a tournament, it's helpful to imitate a real tournament environment—draw three questions, pick the one you'd pick in round, and prepare a full speech.

But if you just can't get yourself to prep a full speech, prepare a one-and-done (an introduction and a body point). It's better than not prepping, and you'll probably want to prepare the full speech afterward.

Regardless of what speech you're prepping, I *highly* recommend recording your speeches. It's hard to reprep a speech if you don't know what happened in the original speech.

Content Drills

- Take a speech you've already delivered and type it out on a Google Doc.
 - Highlight the different parts of your substructure, and really scrutinize your analysis. (It's much easier to scrutinize your analysis when you can see each part of it at the same time!)
 - You can also revise your content for clarity/word economy much more easily on a doc. I've found that getting an intro/point under ~200 words in a doc means it's pretty word-efficient.
- Have yourself/a friend cross-examine your speech for holes in your analysis.
- For impacts in particular, try to find sources that you can use to quantify your impacts. (Practicing this outside of prep can speed up the process of doing so in prep.)

Delivery Drills

- Gesture with water bottles in your hands. (It'll make your gestures more intentional.)
- Give your speech standing with your back to a wall. You'll notice swaying/slumping much more easily.
- Regive your speech focusing on one delivery skill at a time: volume, gestures, fluency, etc. Stack the skills on top of each other instead of focusing on all of them at once.
- Stop/starts - stop whenever you make a mistake in the speech and start from the beginning of the speech/the point. (Personally, I'm not a big fan of these because they don't teach you how to fight through flubs, but I know there are many people who say that stop/starts prevent bad habits from forming).



In my experience, I've found that practicing only the week of a tournament helps you get back to your existing "maximum" extemp level. Improvement happens during the off-weeks when you can actually change more about your extemping.