

Debate Lesson: Everything about P.O.Is (Point of Information)

8 MIN • YOUTUBE • [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=Z0RZXsBIVko](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0RZXsBIVko)

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SUMMARY

In this video, the speaker discusses the importance of accepting Points of Information (POIs) during debates, highlighting how they can impact scoring and overall performance. The speaker shares strategies for effectively handling POIs, emphasizing the need for confidence and timing in responses.

- *Accepting at least one POI is crucial to avoid losing points in debates.*
- *POIs can enhance a debater's image if handled well, showcasing engagement and confidence.*
- *Ideal times to accept POIs are between arguments or classes, avoiding critical moments in your speech.*
- *Respond to POIs with a clear "yes" or "no" and provide brief justification.*
- *Avoid over-responding to POIs; keep responses concise (15-30 seconds) to maintain speech flow.*
- *Confidence in responding can shift the perception of the debate in your favor.*
- *Different tournaments may have varying preferences for how POIs are raised; clarify these before starting.*
- *Use POIs as opportunities to demonstrate your knowledge and assertiveness in the debate.*

So, I'm here in Hanoi, Vietnam, and my debaters just finished the debate tournament called ASDC, Asia Schools Debating Championships, and my students did very well. And when they were in the Octofinals, they faced it up against Team China, and unfortunately lost. One of the reasons why they lost was because they did a very bad job responding to POIs. [Music] So, I hope you've never had this situation, but being in front of a crowd and somebody raises their hand and they say POI and they ask you something really hard and you don't know what to say. Those two 3 seconds where you're quiet and not saying anything feel like an eternity. And this is why a lot of people, a lot of debaters are scared of POIs. Some of my debaters, I have to really push them and push them to accept POIs. And even then, they're they're really scared of what it might entail.

But why do we accept POIs? Well, first of all, the most clear reason why we accept POIs is that if you don't accept them, you lose points. And the more points you lose, the more likely you're going to lose the debate, right? For every person, every time you don't accept a POI, if you don't accept at least one POI inside your speech, you're going to lose points. But the second thing is that accepting POIs is actually a really good opportunity. If you accept the POI very well, if very confidently, and respond to the POI in a great way, you actually come out looking better than you were before. Just as a rule of thumb, try to accept one POI, but also try not to accept more than one POI. Don't accept more than one, don't accept less than one. Judges these days just looking for you to accept one and to show some engagement with the other team. The reason why we don't accept more than one is because if you accept more than one, you're wasting time in your speech, right? You want to be able to have time to set up, to make arguments, to do rebuttals, make clashes, all of the rest.

Here's a few rules of thumb of when you should accept a POI. First of all, if they ask a POI during protected time, the response should always be it's protected time, right? And the more confident you say that, the better. Just say it's protected time. So, should you accept a POI right after protected time or right before protected time? No. Try to accept POIs in the middle of your speech, but not in the middle of something important. So, what I recommend is if you have two arguments and you are a PM speaker, I would accept the POI between the two arguments. You could say something like, before I move on to my next argument, I'd like to accept the POI. Or you can accept a POI when you're between classes. Say you have two classes and you're the whip speaker. You can say before I move on to the next class, I'd like to take a POI.

Right? It's a very simple, very convenient way for you to take a POI. But never take a POI while you're doing something important, while you're mechanizing your argument, while you're giving your argument impacts, while you're in the middle of something uh that you need to finish. Don't accept POIs on their terms. Accept POIs in your terms. If you're in the middle of your argument and somebody asks you a POI or raises a POI, uh you can just say, "I'll take you later." And then when you're done that argument, you can then say, "I'll take you now." Again, always take POIs on your own time. Of course, it's different in online tournaments and offline tournaments. Sometimes on online, you can tell people to raise their POIs in the chat. I prefer that you get asked POIs vocally, verbally, but there are a lot of different POI preferences. Make sure that you let the other debaters know what your POI preference is before you start your speech. Even in Inerson tournaments, there are different POI preferences. There are preferences where you say, "Please stand up and I'll take a POI or please raise uh say the word POI and raise it that way." There are different preferences even in in-person tournaments.

So, the most important part of this video is how should you respond to a POI? Say they ask a POI and you accept it and then they ask it. What do you say in response? Well, it always depends on what is asked of you. But I would start with either one of two answers, yes or no. Right? So, say they ask you a question like, "Isn't it common for animals to be abused in zoos?" Right? After you should just answer no. No, it's not common. And he these are the reasons why it's not common or if it's something that you actually agree with cuz people can raise POIs to things that fall within your own team stance. I'll give you an example. So my debaters were asked a POI during a debate about politicians and the POI was about don't you want diversity within politicians?

And my debater was sitting standing there and not really knowing what to say. And he stood there for like two seconds before he said I don't really understand your POI. and then he moved on. That was not a good response. What he should have said is, "Yeah, we do care about diversity and we are the team that gives the diversity and then just move on because his argument later was about diversity of politicians and about having minority groups represented." And so if they ask a POI that you agree to, then you can just say, "Yeah, I of course I agree to that. Why is why are you asking that POI? It's kind of strange." But a lot of that response has to do with your confidence. Your confidence that what they're asking isn't really helping their size.

So when it comes to POIs, make sure that you thoroughly listen, but make sure you don't take too much time to respond and make sure you respond quite clearly. Say yes or no, right? And then actually substantiate what you said, right? If you said their POI or the claim within their POI is false, if you said it's no, then you have to give one or two mechanisms as to why it is a no. In the worst case scenario, say you don't know what they said and

you don't know how to respond their POI. The in the worst case scenario, what you can say is that you're going to respond to the POI within your argumentation or you're going to respond to the POI within your clash. It's a bit of a lazy way to respond to a POI and it's not the best thing to do, but it's better than just standing there and saying uh uh uh and being frozen. You really don't want that to happen.

Is it possible to overrespond to a POI? Yes. In feeling that you have to take down that POI, in feeling that you have to attack what they said and over attack it, you can waste a lot of valuable time in your speech attacking it and attacking it and attacking and explaining against it. Try not to spend like a minute. Try not to spend even more than 30 seconds responding to a POI because what you're doing is you're falling into their strategy and losing valuable seconds for your own material.

So when it comes to responses for POIs, here's some very clear guidelines that I would like you to follow. Take one POI, take it when you want to take it, respond to it very clearly with a yes or a no, and then explain why that is true. And then don't over emphasize responding to the POI. Just take 15 to 20 seconds to respond and move on with your speech. And do it with confidence. The more confidence you have when you respond to the POI, the stronger you're going to look to the judge and the better it's going to look for you and your team. And when you get really good at responding to POIs, you can actually make the other team look like they don't have it together, look like they are the ones on the back foot and make them regret asking the POI. Why is why are you asking that POI? It's kind of strange.

And so POIs are opportunities for you to show how amazing you are. >> You are amazing. >> How confident you are in your case. And so don't be scared of POIs. Use them to your advantage even when you're the one responding to them. That's all from me today. And I hope this is a useful video for your responding to POIs.