# Presentation: Lincoln-Douglas Debate

For your presentation grade in this class, I want you to participate in a Lincoln-Douglas Style Debate.

To choose your topic, visit http://debate.marmorstein.org and select a topic as you did for the semester papers (by Feb. 1).

In a Lincoln-Douglas debate, the opponents alternate speeches. The affirmative speaker speaks three times. The negative speaker speaks twice. The general structure is this:

## Speeches

First affirmative constructive speech (1AC): 6 minutes
– The affirmative speaker lays out his case for the proposal.

Cross-Examination: 3 minutes
– The negative speaker asks questions about the case.

First negative constructive speech (1NC): 7 minutes
– The negative speaker argues against the points made in the first affirmative constructive and describes possible disadvantages of the plan.

Cross-Examination: 3 minutes
– The affirmative speaker asks questions about his opponent's arguments.

First Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR): 4 minutes
The affirmative speaker responds (very quickly) to all of the negative speaker's points.

First Negative Rebuttal (1NR): 3 minutes
The negative speaker replies to the points made in the 1AR.

*Note: In most Lincoln Douglas debates, the negative speaker would have 6 minutes and the affirmative speaker would give a second three minute rebuttal afterward, but in the interest of time, I have abbreviated the format a bit.*

## Preparation Time

In between speeches, the speakers can use “prep time” to look through their evidence and decide what to say. Each speaker gets a total of 5 minutes of preparation time to use through the debate.

## Summary:

Each person gets 10 minutes to talk, plus 3 minutes of cross-examination, plus 5 minutes to prep. That's 18 minutes each or 36 minutes total.

**Constructive Speeches**

In the constructive speeches, you make your case for or against a proposed policy.

Example:

The State of Virginia Should Significantly Change Its Speed-Limit Laws
(See attached sheet)

**The structure of the 1AC:**

I. Statement of the topic
II. Harms
- What "bad" things are happening because we haven't adopted the policy?
- Usually qualitative

III. Significance
- Why do these things matter? (Financial cost, environmental cost, health cost, etc.)
- Usually quantitative

IV. Inherency
- We can't fix the "bad things" without the plan.
- For instance:
  - There is some sort of legal barrier.
  - There is some sort of prevailing attitude that prevents a solution.
  - No one has done this yet.

V. Plan
-- Mandates
- What steps can we take to solve the problem?
- Should be fairly specific.

-- Funding
- How will we fund the proposal?

-- Administration
- Who will implement the proposal?

VI. Solvency
- The plan will solve the problems outlined in the "harms".
- Use of empirical examples (it's worked somewhere else) is a good strategy to use.

VII. Closing Statement
-- Something like "vote for me" or "support this proposal"

**The structure of the 1NC:**

The first negative constructive should follow the same order as the affirmative constructive. You want to attack pretty much everything they said, if you can. The best way to do this is to cite a source that contradicts it, but you can also just use common sense, logic, or other argumentation.

The general pattern is to do something like, "They said X, but really Y."

To attack their plan, you want to present some disadvantages. You should prepare these arguments in advance. Each “disadvantage” should be presented in three parts:

Link
– Their plan causes the disadvantage.

Uniqueness
– Nothing else causes it.

Impact
– It's bad.

For example,

Disadvantage 1: Raising speed limits leads to worse accidents

A. Link: Raising speed limits increases the severity of accidents

Katy Waldman, "I Can't Drive 85: Do Higher Speed limits cause more car accidents?", Slate.com, June 12, 2012

“Do higher speed limits cause more car accidents? No, but they do cause more severe ones. Accidents that occur at high speeds are more often fatal, since high-velocity objects collide with greater force. Overwhelmingly, studies show that freeway deaths increase with freeway speed limits, although it’s hard to know how much of that upturn stems from the greater volume of overall traffic that’s drawn in by looser speed regulations.”

B. Uniqueness: Since speed limits are directly related to more severe accidents, other changes don't affect whether the speed limit is safe.

C. Impact: High speed causes fatalities

“There were 274 traffic deaths in NYC in 2012, compared to 245 in 2011. Motor vehicle occupant fatalities increased from 50 to 73. The number of pedestrian and cyclist deaths was mostly unchanged: 166 in 2012 compared to 163 in 2011. Pedestrian fatalities were up in 2012, while cyclist deaths decreased.

Speeding was the leading single factor in traffic deaths, contributing to 81 fatal crashes.”

Disadvantage 2: Raising the speed limit reduces fuel economy

A. Link: Cars are designed to run at 55 MPH

“Speed Kills MPG”, MPGForSpeed.com, May 13, 2008

“Unfortunately, it's true. Your car's gas mileage decreases once it gets past its optimal speed. For most cars, this is around 55-60 mph. This means that every time you go over this speed, you're essentially wasting gas and money - and creating unnecessary greenhouse gases. “

B. Uniqueness: Other factors that affect MPG are unlikely to change
- Weight of the car
- Volume of the car
- Make and Model of the car

- Driving behavior like jack rabbit starts

C. Impact: Greenhouse gases cause global warming and kill us all

Spencer Weart, “The discovery of global warming”, American Institute of Physics, February 2015

“A few scientists took a closer look in the late 1950s when they realized that the level of carbon dioxide gas (CO2) in the atmosphere might be rising, suggesting that the average global temperature might climb a few degrees Celsius before the end of the 21st century. Roger Revelle, the most senior of these researchers, publicly speculated that in the 21st century the greenhouse effect might exert "a violent effect on the earth's climate" (as Time magazine put it). He thought the temperature rise might eventually melt the Greenland and Antarctic icecaps, raising sea level enough to flood coastlines. Noting that climate had changed abruptly in the past, perhaps bringing the downfall of entire civilizations in the ancient world, in 1957 Revelle told a Congressional committee that the greenhouse effect might someday turn Southern California and Texas into "real deserts."

**Cross Examination:**

What is cross-examination for?

1. To clarify things you missed or didn't understand.

2. To try to "trip up" your opponent by getting them to contradict themselves.

3. To "set up" one of your arguments in the next speech.

**Rebuttals:**

Rebuttals are your chance to attack your opponent's arguments. You are not allowed to introduce new arguments in a rebuttal (that is what the constructives are for), however you CAN (and should) introduce new evidence supporting the points you already made in the constructive speeches.

General Rule:

The affirmative must win at least ONE point of EVERY issue (Harms, Significance, Inherency, Plan, and Solvency) to win.

The negative must win ALL points of at least ONE issue to win.

**Flowing:**

It is very important to take good notes during the debate. To do this properly, turn your notebook sideways. Divide each page into 3 or 4 columns, one for each speech. Take notes about each speech in its column, leaving space between each point so that you can match points in the 1AC to points in the 1NC to points in the 1AR to points in the 1NR. (This is called “flowing”)

**Tips for good public speaking:**

1. Make eye contact with each person in the audience at least once. Do NOT look at your opponent during cross examination.

2. Instead of saying uh or um, pause and collect your thoughts.

3. Pay attention to volume. Be sure you are loud enough we can hear you!

4. Preparation makes the best speech. Do your research and have your briefs ready. If you are negative, this is especially important!

5. Use appropriate gestures. Don't pace back and forth. Try to keep your hands still unless you need them to make a point.

6. Make sure you use your time effectively. If you are giving a 1AC, read through your speech a couple times to see how long it takes. Make sure you can get through the whole thing in 6 minutes!

7. Use formal language. Be polite to your opponent.

You will be evaluated using the Speaking Intensive Rubrick linked from the course web site and attached to this packet.

## I. Introduction

Speed Limit laws, while well-intentioned, are ineffective and actually create many problems. Therefore, I believe that

The Virginia state government should significantly change its speed limit laws.

## II. Harms

### A. Low speed limits cause more accidents

Katy Waldman, "I Can't Drive 85: Do Higher Speed limits cause more car accidents?", Slate.com, June 12, 2012

"Two recent cases helped refute the notion that relaxed speed limits lead to more accidents. After New York raised the cap on its highway traffic to 65 mph in 1995, the state's total crash rate dropped by 4 percent. And in 2000, the Automobile Club of Southern California determined that higher speed limits in that state did not increase the rate of statewide accidents over a period of five years. A study of Iowa's 1996 increase of the state speed limit from 55 to 65 mph concluded that this speed hike caused a jump in traffic accidents. In a lengthy literature review of traffic engineering studies, however, it stands alone in its conclusion that higher speed limits cause more crashes."

### B. Federal studies show higher speed limits are safer

"Effects of Raising and Lowering Speed Limits", Report Number FHWA-RD-92-084, U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, October 1992.

"Contrary to public perception that accidents decrease when speed limits are lowered and increase when speed limits are raised, the accident rates in table 9 indicate that this perception may not be true. The data actually indicate that accident rates were reduced at sites where speed limits were raised and increased at sites where speed limits were lowered, assuming that the comparison site accident history reflects what actually would have occurred at the experimental sites. The validity of this assumption, as well as the results of the accident evaluation, are presented in the following paragraphs."

### C. Higher speed limits reduce congestion

Rick Jervis, "Super-high speed limits raising hope -- and some worry", USA Today, Dec. 29, 2012

"The highway project, which refurbished and raised the speed limit of the southern 40 miles of Highway 130, was a way to unclog interstates between Dallas, San Antonio and Austin, she said. "Texans no longer need to sit in traffic when driving through Central Texas," Beyer said. "We are providing drivers an option for a more efficient and less congested roadway to San Antonio.""

## III. Significance

### A. Traffic deaths kill more people than guns

Adrienne Lafrance, "America's Top Killing Machine", The Atlantic, Jan. 12, 2015

"For the better part of a century, the machine most likely to kill an American has been the automobile. Car crashes killed 33,561 people in 2012, the most recent year for which data is available, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Firearms killed 32,251 people in the United States in 2011, the most recent year for which the Centers for Disease Control has data."

### B. Traffic hurts the environment

Paul Sanders, "How Traffic Jams Affect Air Quality", The Environmental Leader, Jan. 5, 2012

"No one will be surprised to learn that areas with the largest number of cars on the road see higher levels of air pollution on average. Motor vehicles are one of the largest sources of pollution worldwide. You may be surprised to learn, however, that slower moving traffic emits more pollution than when cars move at freeway speeds. Traffic jams are bad for our air."

### C. Traffic hurts the economy

Natalie Clarkson, "What is the economic impact of traffic?", Virgin.com, Oct. 31, 2014

"Congestion has an obvious negative impact – you only have to look at a city like Cairo to see that. The Egyptian capital has 20 million people, two million cars, 23,600 miles of road and huge traffic problem. The congestion is so bad that many people socialise through open windows, trading insults, cigarettes and small talk. Traffic laws are ignored and drivers do as they please – with some pretty disastrous consequences. Ambulances get

blocked, pedestrians are killed and there are lots of multi car pile-ups, especially on the city’s ring road, which was originally built to ease congestion but is now as manic as the city’s other routes.

A World Bank study on Cairo’s traffic problem in 2010 revealed that the annual cost of traffic in the greater metropolitan area was about 50 billion Egyptian pounds – four percent of Egypt’s entire GDP. Compared to Jakarta, which is as densely populated as the Egyptian capital and famous for its traffic but only loses 0.6% of Indonesia’s GDP to traffic costs."

## IV. Inherency

### A. Virginia Speed Limits are Determined by the general assembly

"Traffic Information: Speed Limits", Virginia Department of Transportation Web Page, Dec. 19, 2014

"Virginia's General Assembly establishes statewide maximum statutory limits and has granted authority to the commonwealth transportation commissioner, who heads the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT), and to cities and certain counties and towns to establish speed limits that do not exceed the maximum allowed by law for highways under their jurisdictions."

### B. The general assembly has been lowering speed limits

Marshall Herman, Virginia Department of Transportation Press Release, July 1, 2014

"Effective July 1, a maximum speed limit of 35 mph will apply to all unpaved roads statewide, as a result of legislation passed by the General Assembly this year.

The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) proposed the revised speed limit for unpaved roads to keep the speed limit consistent. Prior to the revision, the maximum speed limit on these roads was 55 mph, though this varied by counties."

## V. Plan

### A. Mandates

1. The Virginia General Assembly shall pass a law raising the maximum speed limit on highways to 85 MPH.

2. This law will take affect Jan. 1, 2016.

### B. Funding

Funding for this proposal shall come from general state revenue.

### C. Adminstration

The Virginia Department of Transporation shall be responsible for implementing this plan.

## VI. Solvency

### A. Higher speed limits have worked in Germany

Brandon Gaille, "17 Fascinating Autobahn Accident Statistics", BrandonGaille.com, Aug. 17, 2014

"The annual fatality rate on the Autobahn in 2.7 per billion kilometers traveled. The United States has a 4.5 fatality rate for the same distance and highly controlled speeds to boot. More than 50% of the Autobahn has no posted speed limit, although there is an advised limit of 130 kilometers per hour."

### B. Higher speed limits have worked in Ohio

Larry Copeland, "Texas raises speed limit to 85 mph: Other states could, too", USA Today, Sept. 8, 2012

"But John Bowman of the National Motorists Association, which advocates for higher speed limits, says it is possible to safely raise speed limits on highways — as long as engineering studies have shown that the road can handle such an increase. He points to the Ohio Turnpike, which raised the speed limit to 70 mph in the spring of 2011. It recorded the lowest fatality rate in its history that same year — six deaths."

## Introduction

While speed limits are not perfect, they are an important check on reckless driving that saves millions of lives every year. Therefore I oppose the idea that:

The Virginia state government should significantly change its speed limit laws.

## I. Harms

Group their points A and B. I will respond to both.

### A. High Speed Limits Cause Accidents

The affirmative wants you to believe that low speed limits cause accidents. However:

1. They only cite a few examples (New York and California). These two states are very different from Virginia. In fact, their own evidence shows that in Iowa, higher speed limits actually led to more accidents.

2. Their federal studies are flawed. They show that variation in speed matters more than actual speed. But there is no evidence to show that drivers will drive at more consistent speeds if the speed limit is higher.

For example, suppose we raised the speed limit to 200MPH, how many drivers would go that fast?

There is no reason to believe that existing speed limits aren't already appropriate.

3. Speeding can make you lose control of your vehicle
"Speed Kills, Arrive Alive", Evidence and Reason Blog, Oct. 23, 2011

"In favour of the slogan is that higher speeds do make it harder to control the vehicle, reduce time to react and increase the severity of a crash. Most people probably understand this already, yet they still speed. In fact people can get really upset when they can't go as fast as they want, though the irony never wears thing when you watch someone zoom past you, weaving through traffic, only to stop behind him at the first red light. "

4. Speeding costs lives

Rick Jervis, "Super-high speed limits raising hope -- and some worry", USA Today, Dec. 29, 2012

"Speed was involved in about one-third of the 32,885 U.S. traffic fatalities counted in 2010, the latest year such figures are available, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. But the number of speeding-related fatalities has been steadily falling, from 13,799 in 2002 to 10,395 in 2010."

### B. Speeding causes more severe accidents

"Effects of Raising and Lowering Speed Limits", Report Number FHWA-RD-92-084, U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, October 1992.

"The relationship between vehicle speed and crash severity is unequivocal and based on the laws of physics. The kinetic energy of a moving vehicle is a function of its mass and velocity squared. Kinetic energy is dissipated in a collision by friction, heat, and the deformation of mass. Generally, the more kinetic energy to be dissipated in a collision, the greater the potential for injury to vehicle occupants. Because kinetic energy is determined by the square of the vehicle's speed, rather than by speed alone, the probability of injury, and the severity of injuries that occur in a crash, increase exponentially with vehicle speed. For example, a 30–percent increase in speed (e.g., from 50 to 65 mi/h [80 to 105 km/h]) results in a 69–percent increase in the kinetic energy of a vehicle. "

### C. Higher speed limits don't reduce congestion

The affirmative wants you to believe that raising speed limits will reduce congestion, but this may not be true.

Jamie Uff, "Stepped Speed Limits improve workzone congestion and safety", ITS International, Route One Publishing, 2015

"On the schemes where SSL is implemented, significant benefits for all stakeholders are expected. Initial micro simulation modelling of SSL indicated that the concept could yield many benefits including reduction in average travel time (and its reliability and predictability), increased flow throughput and easing of congestion."

SSL is "Stepped-Speed-Limit" which imposes an additional, lower, speed limit before construction zones.

## III. Significance

### A. Traffic deaths kill more people than guns

– The affirmative wants you to believe speed is a leading cause of death, but:

1. Their own article says that firearms are expected to kill MORE people than car crashes in 2015. The information they quote is outdated.

2. They don't say how many of those deaths were from speed.

**B. Traffic doesn't hurt the environment**

1. Traffic encourages people to use alternative forms of transportation, such as light rail and public transportation. This decreases overall pollution.

2. Tighter emissions standards are reducing the amount of pollution from traffic.

**C. Traffic is actually GOOD for the economy**

1. Notice that their own source says that Indonesia is better than Egypt.

2. More traffic means more people in your community buying stuff!

Natalie Clarkson, "What is the economic impact of traffic?", Virgin.com, Oct. 31, 2014

"It's not the same story worldwide however – many American cities with the worst congestion also have the largest economies. If nothing else, a lot of traffic is a sign that a lot of people have jobs to get to. For example, during the US government shutdown of 2013, congestion in the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington noticeably declined."

## IV. Inherency

Group points A and B. The affirmative says that the Virginia General Assembly is blocking speed limit laws. However:

1. Their evidence only shows they lowered the speed limit on dirt roads.

2. Their evidence shows that the General Assembly is willing to make changes to speed limits laws.

## V. Plan

The affirmative plan has the following disadvantages.

Disadvantage 1: Cost

A. Link: Replacing speed limit signs costs money

Larry Copeland, "Texas raises speed limit to 85 mph: Other states could, too", USA Today, Sept. 8, 2012

“With federal and state dollars to rebuild highways and bridges dwindling, more states are turning to private companies to fund the projects in exchange for toll revenue or other payouts, said Joshua Schank, president and CEO of the non-partisan Eno Center for Transportation.”

B. Impact: Increased spending will cause Virginia to go bankrupt

1. This will reduce the amount of money for welfare programs.

2. Those in poverty will starve.

## VI. Solvency

Group points A and B.

They want you to believe that raising speed limits has worked elsewhere, but:

1. Virginia is very different from Germany and Ohio

2. Their sample size is very small

3. There is evidence that higher speed is only safe if the roads are well engineered. Many of Virginia's highways are not engineered for high speeds.

Larry Copeland, "Texas raises speed limit to 85 mph: Other states could, too", USA Today, Sept. 8, 2012

"Texas officials say Highway 130 is engineered to safely allow the high speeds. Three weeks after opening in late October, however, the artery saw its first traffic fatality."

**Speaking Rubric for CMSC/MATH 350**

Name: _____

Content Knowledge (12 pts)

– Technical content is presented fully, correctly, and with clear mastery of the material.

– Questions (if any) are answered with clear and complete explanations.

Organization (12 pts)

Purpose Introduction Main Points Transitions Summary

– The presentation is well organized including an introduction in which the purpose (on the assigned topic) is clearly stated.

– Main points are clear and organized with effective transitions. Presentation is summarized effectively

Presentation Skills (8 pts)

– The speaker is poised, natural, and confident

– The speaker uses appropriate gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact.

– The speaker is properly prepared

– The speaker hold's the audience's attention and stays focused on the topic.

Time Management (4 pts)

– The presentation appropriately paced (neither rushed nor slow) with plenty of allocation of time for development of main points and for questions.

Verbal Delivery (4 pts)

– Speech is clear and audible.

– Language is descriptive, accurate, and engaging.

– Language is appropriate to the presentation topic and audience.

Argumentation (10 pts)

– Arguments are properly supported with evidence or logical argument.

– Rebuttals properly address issues raised by the other speaker.

– Cross examination is relevant, civil, and comprehensive.