

## LDEP Research Ethics Guidelines for Students

Research yields two competitive benefits for Lincoln-Douglas debaters: first, it introduces them to new ideas and perspectives; second, it gives credibility to their empirical and theoretical claims. To earn these benefits honestly, debaters must make every reasonable effort to cite, quote, and discuss research sources accurately in rounds. Debate can function as a fair competition and a productive discussion of important value questions only when members of the debate community share a well-founded trust in the academic integrity of speakers. The most fundamental norms of academic integrity are to give credit where credit is due and to represent other people's ideas with the greatest care and accuracy. Coaches, teammates, and other sources of debate evidence have a responsibility to help debaters use research correctly, but each speaker bears the final responsibility for his or her own use of evidence. The Lincoln-Douglas Education Project offers the following guidelines to debaters to help them contribute to a trustworthy research community.

- 1. Take the time to gain a first-hand understanding of each cited author's position.** The views of authors writing about complex and controversial subjects are often quite nuanced. They cannot typically be understood on the basis of reading a few sentences or paragraphs taken out of their original context. Therefore, you should treat complete chapters or articles as your basic research units. Short quotations are appropriate (indeed, desirable) in debate rounds, but only if you know their context well enough to explain it accurately. If you misrepresent the views of an author due to carelessness, you are unfair both to the author, whose beliefs you are distorting, and to your opponent, over whom you may be gaining a dishonest advantage.
- 2. Be especially careful to distinguish authors' statements of opposing views from their statements of their own views.** Good writers, like good debaters, often anticipate and answer objections to their own positions. Sometimes authors will write for several paragraphs or even pages in the voice of an objector before switching back to their own voice to answer the objection. Watch for qualifications like, "it is often thought," "allegedly," "others maintain," or "critics claim," which may signal views an author does not himself endorse. It is dishonest to quote an author in support of a position the author does not hold. This is another reason you should read complete chapters and articles rather than only paragraphs taken out of their original context.
- 3. For all in-round quotations, have photocopies (for printed sources) or printouts (for computer sources) of the quotation itself plus enough surrounding text to establish its original context.** Do not rely on handwritten or retyped copies of quotations. Original source copies allow you, your judge, or your opponent to check quotations in their original form if a question arises. A communal norm that debaters may only cite sources for which they have original photocopies or printouts also helps to discourage evidence fabrication.
- 4. Carefully note *complete* citation information for each source at the time you copy it.** Complete citation information is basically everything you need to establish the credibility of the source and to allow someone else to locate any quotations from the source easily. Be sure to include author credentials (e.g., degrees, job title, etc.) with all written citations. If a source provides no author credentials, try an online search of the author's name. An appendix to this document explains and illustrates complete citation information for several common source types.
- 5. Include adequate citation information in speeches.** At a minimum, adequate citation information includes (a) the author's complete name, (b) the author's credentials (if available), and (c) the title of the book or journal from which the quotation was taken. This information will help listeners gauge the strength of your evidence and allow them to research the same sources.

6. **Do not exaggerate the claims sources make.** Be scrupulously accurate when you preview or summarize evidence. If you want to interpret a narrow quoted claim as part of a broader pattern or use an author's qualified conclusion to infer an unqualified conclusion, make it clear that the interpretation or inference is your own, not the author's. Again, it is unfair to both the author and to your opponent for you to do otherwise. You will rightly appear more credible to your audience if you err on the side of modesty when interpreting research sources. If you prepare evidence briefs, you can help yourself avoid unfair exaggeration by tagging each quotation using only words found in the quotation itself.
7. **Do not add, delete, or substitute words in quoted evidence.** Read quotations exactly as they appear in their original sources. Anything else is dishonest. Selectively editing evidence to distort its meaning to your own advantage is especially reprehensible and, if detected, is grounds for dismissal from a tournament. If you believe a quotation does not clearly communicate the author's real point, you should explain this—*but not by altering the quotation!* For example, if a quotation contains the pronoun "it" referring (you believe) to the Vietnam War, do not change the pronoun. Instead, introduce the quotation by stating that the author is referring to the Vietnam War.
8. **Make your evidence available to opponents or judges who ask to examine it.** Debaters and judges should not normally ask for printed copies of evidence during rounds. However, sometimes judges may have legitimate questions about your representation of a source. If such questions arise, graciously comply with requests for further citation information or copies of the original source. If you have carefully researched and honestly presented your evidence, you have nothing to fear. Sharing sources and citations contributes to the transparency and trust essential to any intellectual community.
9. **If you believe an opponent has *innocently* misrepresented a source, you may ask your opponent to repeat the evidence during cross-examination and explain your competing interpretation to the judge in your next speech.** Habits of careful research should make flagrant misrepresentations of evidence rare, but people do sometimes make honest mistakes. Some sources (e.g., complex philosophical theories) also lend themselves to a range of legitimate interpretations. If your opponent's misinterpretation significantly affects the debate round, you should challenge that interpretation in your speeches and explain what you take to be a better interpretation of the evidence in question. Keep the focus on the substance of the evidence and try not to impugn your opponent's character.
10. **If you believe an opponent has *intentionally* misrepresented a source, you may take the steps discussed above, but you should also tactfully tell the judge this after the round has been decided and ask her to investigate.** Intentional research dishonesty is as serious a charge as can be brought against a speaker, and you should never make this charge lightly. (Your opponent's reputation aside, your own reputation will suffer if you become known as someone who carelessly accuses others of dishonesty.) But if you have good reason to believe that an opponent is intentionally misusing sources, you have a responsibility to the academic integrity of debate to report your suspicion to the judge. You should do so in a sober and non-vindictive way, and you should respectfully defer to whatever determination the judge or tournament makes about the charge. It is better to address honesty concerns to a judge, coach, or tournament official than to argue directly with opponents or to spread unproven rumors about them.

## Appendix: Complete Citation Information

Complete citation information for a **book by a single author** includes: (a) author's complete name, (b) author's qualifications (if available), (c) book title, (d) publisher, (e) date of publication, and (f) exact page numbers. Here is an example:

Mark Eli Kalderon (Reader in Philosophy at University College London). Moral Fictionalism. Oxford University Press: 2005. p. 124.

Complete citation information for an **essay in an edited collection** includes: (a) essay author's complete name, (b) essay author's qualifications (if available), (c) essay title, (d) book title, (e) book editor's name, (f) publisher, (g) date of publication, (h) exact page numbers. Be careful not to confuse the author of the essay or chapter with the editor of the book! Here is an example:

Gilbert Harman (Professor of Philosophy at Princeton University). "Is There a Single True Morality?" in Relativism: Interpretation and Confrontation (ed. Michael Krausz). University of Notre Dame Press: 1989. p. 373.

Complete citation information for an **article in a printed magazine or journal** includes: (a) author's name, (b) author's qualifications (if available), (c) magazine or journal title, (d) volume number (for scholarly journals), (e) issue date, (f) exact page numbers. Here is an example:

Leon R. Kass (Professor, Committee for Social Thought, University of Chicago). "The Wisdom of Repugnance: Why We Should Ban the Cloning of Humans." The New Republic June 2, 1997. p. 20.

Complete citation information for an **article originally published in a magazine or journal but accessed through an online portal** (e.g., InfoTrac, JSTOR, Academic Universe) includes items (a)-(f) above from citations for articles in printed magazines and journals plus (g) name of online portal. Here is an example:

Leon R. Kass (Professor, Committee for Social Thought, University of Chicago). "The Wisdom of Repugnance: Why We Should Ban the Cloning of Humans." The New Republic June 2, 1997. p. 20. (via InfoTrac)

Complete citation information for **sources available only online** (e.g., blogs, websites) includes: (a) author's name (cite the organization if no individual author is given for website text), (b) author's qualifications (if available), (c) title of article or webpage, (d) name of individual or organization hosting website, (e) web address, (f) date of access. Here are two examples:

Jonathan Dancy (Philosophy Professor, University of Reading). "Moral Particularism." Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy website (plato.stanford.edu). Accessed November 19, 2005.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. "Factory Farming: Mechanized Madness." PETA website (www.peta.org). Accessed October 20, 2005.