

Example of A Debate Speech – 1st Speaker

First Speaker (or Leader) of the Affirmative

Example topic: That Globalisation is Ruining our World

Mr Chairman/Madam Chair, Members of the Negative Team, Ladies and Gentlemen . . . Nobel Prize-winning economist Professor Joseph Stiglitz of Columbia University, New York, who was just here for the 6th Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organisation, wrote in his Nobel prize-winning book *Globalisation and its Discontents*, that “truly fair competition would be beneficial to most of the world’s citizens, but that today’s so-called ‘globalisation’ is unfair competition which only benefits a **few** individuals and a **few** companies in a **few** of the world’s richest countries. It is the triumph of the **few** against the many”.

This is a good starting-point for our definition. The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines “globalisation” as “world-wide trading”, but we need to go further. Roget’s Thesaurus, the number one idiomatic dictionary, says that globalisation is the “systemic penetration of world markets for the **benefit** of the World Trade Organisation/World Bank elites”. Note that this “market penetration” is not for **our** benefit as world citizens, but for the benefit of the elite few.

Let’s use the Concise Oxford definition of the verb “ruining” as “greatly damaging”, while Roget’s Thesaurus defines “our world” as “all people’s social systems, forms of economic organisation, including our home-grown industries and self-owned stores”.

So today’s motion is clear. This system of penetrating world markets for the benefit of the elite few is greatly damaging our social system, our forms of economic organisation and our environment. This is what “ruining our world” means and this is what is happening right now. Let me stress – we would not be against “truly fair competition” that would be beneficial to most of the world’s citizens. However, we have to be very clear about what the current WTO style “globalisation” is. It is market penetration to benefit an elite. Therefore, it is clear that this “globalisation” is “greatly damaging” or “ruining” our world.

I, as Leader, will show you how globalisation is damaging our social system worldwide. Yolanda, my 2nd Speaker, will examine local and international examples of economic damage caused by “globalisation”. Last but not least, Erica, my 3rd Speaker, will demonstrate the damage caused to our world’s environment.

As Professor Stiglitz has said, “truly fair competition” would be beneficial, but the WTO’s market penetration actually fosters unfair competition. The biggest companies in the richest countries grab the lion’s share of the world markets, pushing out smaller companies in poorer countries. The poorer countries are then only useful as sources of cheap labour for the offshore companies.

This damages the world's social systems. One of the best examples comes from Mexico, which acceded to the WTO in 1993. One of the conditions that the US Treasury insisted on was that Mexico dismantle its minimum wage laws. The World Bank annual figures showed that the minimum wage declined from 40 Mexican pesos an hour in 1992 to 23.5 pesos by 1995.

Both the US and Mexican societies lost out. US firms like the Nike Shoe Company moved to Mexico and the higher-paid US workers lost their jobs. Mexican workers then had to work twice as hard for fewer pesos. Their legal protections were gone and then the US union protections had to be lowered so that US workers could compete. The only winner was the Nike Shoe Company whose profits soared by 55.6% between 1992 and 1996, according to World Bank figures.

Therefore, I leave you with this thought, "Globalisation is ruining our world".

First Speaker (or Leader) of the Negative

Example topic: That women who undergo cosmetic surgery have been duped

Madam Chair, Members of the Affirmative Team, Ladies and Gentlemen . . . the Leader of the Affirmative tried to have a field day with horror stories about women's cosmetic surgery, but as a former HK Chief Secretary, Anson Chan, wrote "Most of the cosmetic surgery HK women undergo is small-scale and necessary, usually the result of accidents or previous surgery, say for breast cancer. For the minority of women who choose cosmetic surgery for reasons of 'vanity', they are 'vain' with their eyes open, they have not been 'duped'."

The Leader gave an adequate definition of women as _____ and the verb "undergo" as _____. But their definition of "cosmetic surgery" was a bit narrow. The 2006 New Worldwide Webster's Dictionary has defined "cosmetic surgery" as "more than medical treatment to improve a person's appearance"; it is "also reconstructive work to rebuild damaged body tissue or limbs". The definition of the verb "duped" also needs more attention. It is more than being "fooled". It is being "deliberately tricked or cheated by an outside force", not "through your own decision". The Affirmative Leader also tried to say that _____ but this is not accurate because _____.

I, as Negative Leader, will show you that women who undergo cosmetic surgery have been unlucky with an accident, illness or an operation, or maybe some are vain, as Anson Chan has said, but they have not been "deliberately tricked or cheated by an outside force" which is what being "duped" means. _____, my 2nd Speaker, will examine the actual situation in China, which is the world's fastest-growing cosmetic surgery market, while _____, my 3rd Speaker, will demonstrate the fallacy of gender-based assertions, such as this one, that the female sex, but curiously not the male sex, has been "duped" into having cosmetic surgery. How can this be? It is far too sweeping a statement.

A survey conducted by RTHK in November 2006 showed that 70.7% of the women surveyed who had had cosmetic surgery had needed to have reconstruction work following an accident, illness or operation, especially after breast cancer surgery as mentioned before. The majority of the women had to rebuild their bodies. It wasn't a choice. They were not being "duped" by anybody. They wanted to replace parts such as a breast cut off in a mastectomy operation or to improve horrific facial scars suffered in a car accident.

Even the 29.3% who had elective cosmetic surgery had chosen it themselves: they had not been duped by surgeons or anyone else. Those statistics formed the basis of Anson Chan's speech.

Given figures such as these, I leave you with this thought "Women who undergo cosmetic surgery have not been duped".