
The Synthesis Solution Protocol REVIEW & EVALUATION MODEL – U.S. WAS NOT JUSTIFIED

This form should be completed separately by the sides that took part in a classroom debate or structured argumentation activity.

The Other Side's Arguments

Identify the strongest argument made by the other side in the debate.

The strongest argument that the other side made was that the Japan started the war by attacking Pearl Harbor, justifying a full military response.

Analyze what makes the argument strong. Is it the evidence, reasoning, or both?

This argument is strongly evidenced in the first half of its claim. Secretary of State Dulles makes it clear not only that 2,500 Americans were killed, but that this was from the American perspective the start of the war with Japan. The second piece of evidence goes further by establishing that Japan's attack was a surprise and intended to do as much damage as possible. The argument's reasoning does a convincing job, too, of analyzing the moral connection between Japan's starting the war and America's use of its most powerful weapon.

Identify the strongest counter-argument or refutation made by the other side in the debate.

The strongest example of a counter-argument by the other side were their two arguments against our third case argument. These two counter-arguments effectively neutralized our argument that using atomic bombs ushered in the nuclear age.

Analyze what makes the counter-argument strong. Is it the evidence, critique, or what (in specific)?

These counter-arguments effectively question whether the nuclear age has been so awful. What has been the negative consequence (so far) to the introduction of nuclear weapons and energy? The counter-arguments are also effective in critiquing the implicit warrant for our argument that the nuclear age may not have been launched, or at least not launched in the same way, if the U.S. hadn't used atomic weapons in World War II. That warrant may not hold up, in light of this critique.

Your Side's Arguments

Identify the weakest argument or counter-argument made by your side in the debate.

The weakest argument that we made was the argument on the introduction of the nuclear age. The weakest counter-argument may have been that Japan was nearly defeated by the summer of 1945, de-justifying the use of atomic bombs. It is actually not that this is a weak counter-argument, but rather that we didn't apply it or contextualize it as well as we might have.

Analyze what makes the argument weak. Is it the evidence, reasoning, depth of critique?

The weakness in our argument about the nuclear age is in our reasoning: the warrant that it is dangerous that other countries having been motivated to acquire nuclear weapons has been weakened by the fact that nuclear weapons have never been used in the 70+ years of the nuclear age.

Our counter-argument on the deteriorated state of the Japanese military by the summer, 1945, should have been presented with clearer reasoning that explained the conclusions that could be drawn from this. Japanese leadership was likely to have been more inclined to accept a full demonstration of the power of atomic weapons, given their weakened military position. Plus, the casualty count of an invasion would have been lower, since Japan's defenses were weakened.