



Dear Omona,

Your two speeches were as strong as any in the debate. You spoke clearly and were only a little too fast, with no obvious verbal tics (“ um, ” “ like, ” “ya know, ” etc.)

Your points were consistently understandable, as your listeners were not only able to follow your individual points but also could relate these points to the larger claim that framed your speech. Still, the general criticism that I offered to everyone applies in your case as well.

Your speeches were not especially dynamic, coming across as a list of arguments rather than an impassioned attempt to persuade. Though you wisely offered definitions at the outset of your opening speech, you didn’t refer back to these definitions much, so they failed to earn much weight in the debate overall.

And though you were very clear, you were also very “ flat ” in your presentation, as you didn’t use tempo, dynamics, or pitch to good effect in making your points. The cross-examinations were generally not very strong in this debate, probably because no one really knew what to argue about.

Nevertheless, I thought you held up rather well to Aloikin’s scattered interrogation of you after your first speech, as you answered her questions directly and candidly without giving up any ground. Your cross-examination of her was more organized, but my sense was that Ololoje also didn’t really give you any openings, seemingly having reasonable answers to your questions. Your rebuttal speech was probably the best attempt in the debate to win favor with the hypothetical judges, as you tried to point out some “voting issues. ”

This was certainly the right strategy to take, and if it was not wholly successful, that is only because you didn’t have a lot of great material to work with. Overall, a good job, one that your classmates can learn from.