

Types of Values

In a Lincoln-Douglas Debate you will need to be able to explain not only which values you are defending but what type of value you are using. There are several methods to use to categorize the values. These are the four most common categories that values are put into.

Universal Values: These are values that there is nearly unanimous agreement as to the importance of them. These would include Sanctity of human life, Peace, and human dignity.

Instrumental Values: These are values that can be used to get something else. In other words the value is an instrument which allows you to get some other things. Examples of these would include Progress (which allows leisure time), Freedom (Through which we can get dignity and/or self actualization), and Knowledge(which helps us get economic prosperity, and progress).

Intrinsic Values: Something has intrinsic worth simply because of what it is and not necessarily what it will lead to or because of its acceptance. Some possible examples of intrinsic values would include beauty, artistic expression, and happiness. We value them because they are an important aspect of life.

Prerequisite Values: These are values that are necessary before you can get to some bigger goal. It is similar to the prerequisite course that you must take in order to get to the more advanced course. Some good examples of this type of value include safety (which is needed before people can even think about having anything else), Justice (which is needed before we can move onto equality), or the common good (which must be honored if we can ever get to a state of peace).

Paramount Values: Think of this type of value like you think of Paramount Studios with the large mountain. It is the value which is above all other things. Some examples of this might include freedom (which many people have given up their lives for and see as essential to a decent life) or sanctity of life (which if we do not value or have renders everything else worthless).

Operative Values: This type of values are the ways that we make judgements on how to live the rest of our lives. We use these values as the overarching and guiding principles which tell us what is always right and wrong. These are things such as Integrity, Honesty, and Loyalty.

******Please note that values can fit into any number of these categories. It is up to the debaters to define them and their importance. The essence of a Lincoln-Douglas debate lies in the debaters comparing the worth of their values by showing how one may take priority over others because of what it gets us.**