

The Elements of a Disadvantage

Disadvantages are potentially complicated arguments that string several different claims together to demonstrate that the affirmative plan will result in some bad outcome. Most “disads” tell a story that involves multiple parts: the plan produces a certain effect (or a series of related effects), that effect is bad, and the bad effect will not happen unless the plan is passed. Let’s talk about the different parts of a disad’s story:

Brink

The brink states that a certain situation exists where something could go either way. This means there is a risk of a problem happening at some point in the future.

Uniqueness

The uniqueness states that this problem will not happen in the future, or is happening now. This is referred to as the status quo, or what is going on right now.

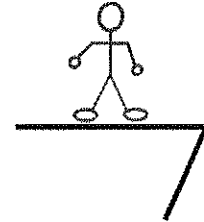
Link

The link states why the affirmative plan causes this problem to happen. The negative usually reads a piece of evidence saying why the affirmative plan causes the way things are now to change.

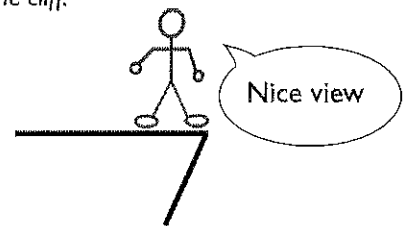
Impact (and Magnitude)

The impact describes the problem that will happen and why it is bad. This impact is usually something very large and harmful. The negative uses this impact to say that the affirmative plan should not be done – although the plan might cause something good to happen, the problems the plan causes are worse. “Magnitude” is exactly how large the impact of the disadvantage is.

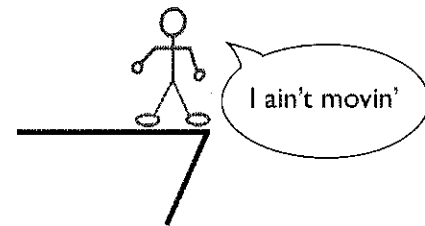
A disad can be thought of like a person standing on a cliff:



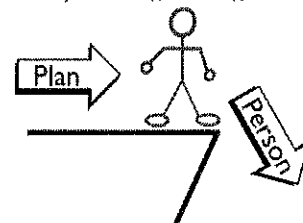
The brink would mean that the person is standing on the edge of the cliff:



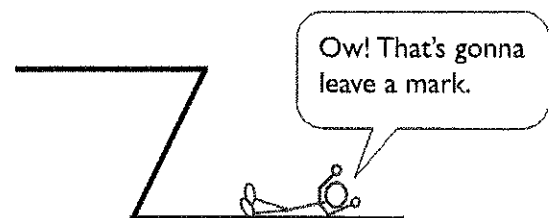
The uniqueness would mean that the person will not jump off the cliff unless pushed:



The link would mean that the plan comes up and pushes the person off the cliff:



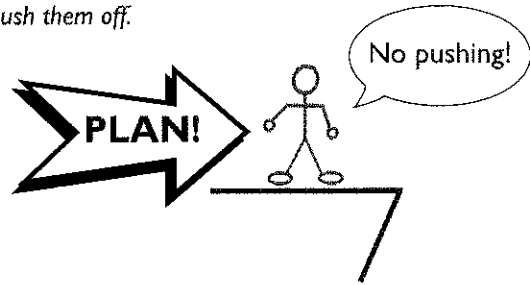
The impact would mean that the person hits the bottom of the canyon really hard:



Threshold

The threshold is how big the plan has to be to cause the problem presented in the disad to happen. If the plan is a very big one, it will probably cause the problem. If the plan is tiny, it probably won't cause the problem. Saying that a disad has a small threshold indicates that it won't take a very large force to push the person off the cliff.

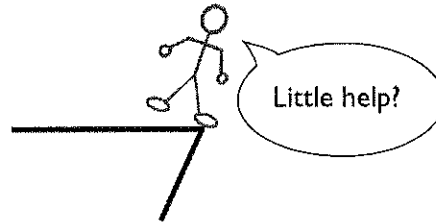
The threshold would measure how hard the plan would have to push for the person to fall off the cliff. If the person was seven feet from the edge of the cliff, the plan would have to be huge to push them off.



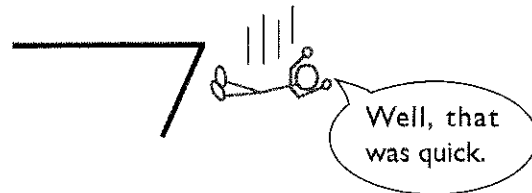
Time Frame

The time frame is how long before the problem the disad presents happens. If there is an especially short time frame, then the problem the plan creates might happen before whatever good things the plan creates. If that happens, then the plan probably isn't a good one. If there is a long time frame, then the good things the plan creates would happen before the problems it creates. If this is the case, the plan probably is a good idea.

The time frame would measure how long before the person fell off the cliff. If there was a long time frame, then the person would teeter on the edge of the cliff for a while before falling.



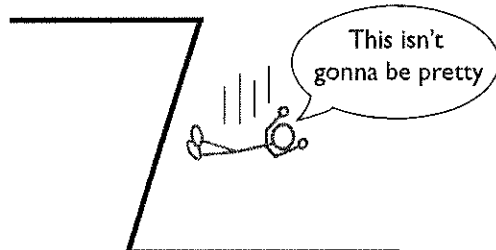
If there were a short time frame, then the person would fall off the cliff right away.



Internal Link

Sometimes when the plan changes something, it does not cause a problem right away. This is when an internal link is needed. The internal link states that when the plan causes something to change, which is the link, then that causes the problem, which is the impact.

The internal link would be that when the plan pushes the person off the cliff, the fall will be so big that the person will hurt. Connecting the fall and the hurt requires an internal link: falling hurts and the hurt is the impact.



Answers to Disadvantages

Not Unique

The non-unique argument states that the problem the disad presents will happen anyway in the status quo. If it were to happen anyway, it doesn't matter if the affirmative plan causes the problem or not.

Link Turn

The link turn states that when the affirmative plan happens, the problem the disad presents is avoided. This often means that when the affirmative plan happens the exact opposite of the problem happens.

Link Take-out

The link take-out states that the affirmative plan doesn't actually cause the problem the disad presents.

Impact Turn

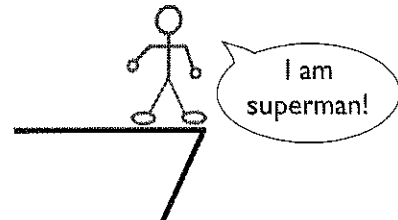
The impact turn states that the problem the disad presents is actually a good thing.

Impact Take-out

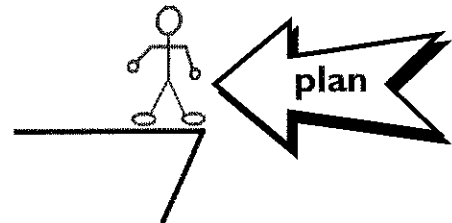
The impact take-out states that the problem the disad presents is not serious or harmful.

There are many affirmative arguments that give reasons why disadvantages are not true. Here are a few of the more popular ones:

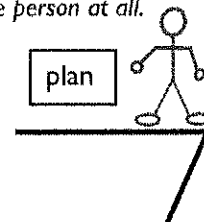
The non-unique argument would mean that the person is going to jump anyway. It doesn't matter if the plan pushes them or not.



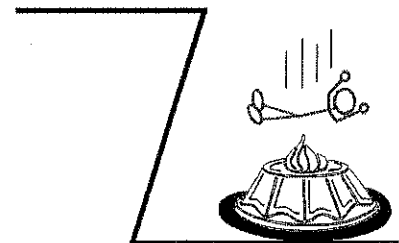
The link turn would mean the plan pushed the person away from the edge of the cliff.



The link take-out would mean that the plan doesn't push the person at all.



The impact turn would mean that the person lands in lime jell-o. Mmmmm! J-E-L-L-O!



The impact take-out would mean that the cliff was just two feet tall. The person only stubs their toe.

