



HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM & VIRTUAL DEBATE RESOURCE GUIDE

Created For:
The World Debating Forum Community

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Hello – we've created this sourcebook for teachers who want to create (or expand!) an in-school classroom debating program. We believe that in-class debates are a powerful but often overlooked tool for teaching and learning. We've included useful and accessible classroom debating ideas, formats, instructional materials, and resources – lots of resources! Please take these materials and ideas and make them fit your students and their needs – this is a sourcebook, not a strict roadmap.

"The strongest body of evidence exists around the relationship between participation in debate activities and improvements in academic attainment. A range of studies suggest that debate has a practical and meaningful influence on the attainment of young people from diverse backgrounds, and in particular on the development of literacy skills."
CfBT Education Trust, 2011.
www.cfbt.com

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We Asked - Could Learning Debate Help Create Change?

At the core of World Debating Forum is a belief in the power of communication to promote mutual respect and understanding. So, we began developing different models for different ages of debaters for what has become the World Debating Forum Guide series. We figured that developing and offering open-access, open-source models for setting up and running school and community debate groups and organizations would promote free speech and open debate and help everyone learn to enjoy differences of opinion.

Given the pace of change and complexity of modern life, the ability to think critically is an important skill for children and young people to develop. The relationship between the practice of participating in debate activities and the development of critical thinking skills is a strong theme in the literature, with both qualitative and quantitative research suggesting that participation can improve critical thinking.

“Debating the evidence: an international review of current situation and perceptions”, CfBT Education Trust, 2011

We know that the debate process promotes a new respect for the facts, and we hope that by encouraging and supporting debate programs we can help motivate more people to communicate more openly and to listen more actively to each other in an evidence-based, fact-based exchange and testing of ideas. What better way to move forward towards a more civilized society than to encourage healthy, respectful discussions among young people every day?

“The strongest body of evidence exists around the relationship between participation in debate activities and improvements in academic attainment. A range of studies suggest that debate has a practical and meaningful influence on the attainment of young people from diverse backgrounds, and in particular on the development of literacy skills.”

**CfBT Education Trust, 2011.
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Why Debate Can Help Kids Grow In Important & Unique Ways

The World Debating Forum intends to help to bring the civilized skills of debating to the forefront of American education, both in and out of school. Our goal is to work with teachers, families and young people to give the highest possible priority to the arts of civil discourse with formal debate foremost among these arts. We want to work together with individual teachers as well as individual schools, parental and community groups to encourage and support widespread experience of the benefits of debating with these “How-To” guides.

“For students from disadvantaged backgrounds, debating and winning – even against those from elite backgrounds – can equip them to see that disadvantage can be overcome and to take on those in positions of power in other situations.”

(Williams et al.; Littlefield

The benefits that debating can offer are life-long, as new research is confirming all the time. Teaching our children the skills and arts of formal debate at the high school level develops cognitive, social and communication skills leading to greater confidence and self-esteem. This self-confidence and ability to communicate improves memory, time-management & research skills and study habits. It encourages high school students to take deep interest in subjects they might otherwise shy away from, and to consider points of view they might never otherwise encounter.

“An analysis by Allen et al. (1999) concludes that training in communication skills (including debate) improves participants’ critical thinking by as much as 44%.”

Debating in high school gives teachers major opportunities to engage their students by leading them (openly or subtly) as they explore topics to debate, where to look for the facts, how to create their arguments, and

other facets of the debate process. Debating can also be a great avenue of redirection for students lacking in social skills and for building on the strengths of students who may be challenged in some areas.

DEBATE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

36%

Increase in reading test scores

31%

Increase in regular attendance

15%

higher-self esteem

100%

Increased interest in their classes

87%

Increase in analytical skills

100%

were unlikely to engage in negative risk behavior (drug use, early pregnancy, and alcohol use)

“Evidence exists to support the claim that debate activities can in fact increase participants’ aspirations for higher education, with US high school debaters showing an increased commitment to attend college in comparison with their non-debating peers.”
(Collier 2004; Shuster 2008).

We know that the child who behaves as a “bully” can redirect their aggressive behavior and the “shy” kid can find their voice. We also know that both bullying and shyness, in most cases at least, give way to openness and communication.

Debate skills carried through high school and college will open up so many opportunities and successes in the debater’s life! High school debaters improve their future college and scholarship opportunities. Those who choose not to go to college will have gained invaluable skills to promote themselves in the workforce throughout their future careers and personal lives.

“Japanese participants in competitive debating in English ranked improved speaking and communication skills, and improved English, as their top benefits.”

(Inoue and Nakano 2004)



Debating teaches people how to think objectively and quickly, benefiting our youth by promoting these skills benefits our society. So from the beginning our challenge was how to get the right tools into the hands of people who could use them – teachers, parents, and community members. Ultimately of course, this set of tools is for the children who we hope will benefit from the formation of their very own Debate team and will quickly discover other teams nearby and online to engage with.

The more we thought about debating as a tool for progress, the more we realized that we needed to do something to promote these programs. From grade school to university, we saw an opportunity to help grow the practice of debate nationwide, especially in schools needing financial assistance. For debating, we plan to help with funding ideas outside of the public-school systems.

The most recent and largest-scale work finds that debaters were 25% more likely to graduate from high school than a group of comparable peers, and that they scored significantly better in reading and English tests, gaining on average an extra 1.02 and 1.04 points respectively.

(Mezuk et al. 2010).

We need your help to fully make this vision a reality. We need volunteers who will contribute time and resources as well as donations to help us continue to develop and disseminate these Debate Guides, provide outreach and training, and help schools and communities fundraise and secure sponsors. ***“The broadening of horizons, improved cultural awareness through meeting new people and spending time with those from diverse backgrounds, and the empowerment of young people are also important elements around the value of debate activities in schools.” -Williams et al. 2001***



WELCOME

Dear Teacher, Parent, & Student

Besides being a lot of fun and a great way to grow personally and meet a lot of interesting people, debating can help anyone learn how to apply critical analysis and to prepare a supportable argument using sound research. It also is one of the best ways for young people to learn valuable communication, public speaking, teamwork and collaboration skills..

If you are interested in introducing debating into your high school classroom, or even in creating a debate club or team that will compete with other schools, then this short guide is for you!

You may be wondering, “Why should I teach debating in my classroom? I’m not sure I want to encourage a lot of arguments!”

You may think that the last thing you need to teach your students is how to debate. You may feel that some of them are well able to argue already! However, debating teaches students how to put together a well-formed, researched argument or point of view which they are then able to defend. It also teaches students to listen to opposing viewpoints and to critically evaluate information that is presented to them. These capabilities are at the heart of the Common Core Standards for education and there are few curricular or non-curricular activities that have a better-researched relationship to the high-order development of these abilities than debating.

Debating can take many forms, both formal and informal. Classroom debating is largely informal, and we believe it is the foundation for all other forms of debate. However, if you are most interested in creating a team for competitive debating, we offer some useful guidance on how formal debating works, the rules of formal debating, and how judging works at various levels.

This handbook is not intended to be a definitive guide but aims instead to offer some useful resources and perhaps some useful guidance to any teacher, principal or parent looking for an introduction to debating in the classroom.

Starting From Scratch

Starting a high school debate team can be challenging, especially if the team eventually ends up as a state or national champion. It takes organizational skill, knowledge and hard work to reach that end, but the goal is attainable. In any case, winning local tournaments is the first step to get the club moving. It’s even more satisfying if the person starting the team becomes the coach and can enjoy the results of having organized the team in the first place.

Inform potential members of the advantages of a debate club. Members gain confidence and poise in speaking, as well as learn how to think logically and research a topic. Inform prospective students how they can make new friends with teammates, have fun and gain prestige for the school if the team is successful. Adding an impressive activity to their college application is also an asset.

Starting and running a debating group, whether it becomes a formal debating team or remains a classroom activity, is an amazing adventure that will bring together amazing people with great ideas who will share wonderful experiences. You will face many obstacles, but it will shape your school and your community for the best and it will definitely shape you and your future in ways that you can’t possibly predict – all of them good! Just don’t forget to make this journey, which will be full of hard work and sometimes even disappointment, fun for everyone involved.

(from) theclassroom.com

HAVE FUN!



THE NEED FOR DEBATE

WHY TEACH DEBATING?

Debating is considered a form of “active learning,” understood as a process of involving students in an activity while they reflect critically about what they are doing. Active learning strategies help students to master content and develop thinking skills in a hands-on way.

There is a serious need for debating and public speaking programs in early grades.

Given the demonstrated importance of oral literacy in middle school, high school, and beyond, it is particularly important to train young students to be active and critical listeners, speakers, and thinkers. These skills are essential to the future academic success of students across the curriculum. If students do not develop sophisticated processing and listening skills, they will not be able to fully take in and engage other aspects of their curricular instruction. Debate provides the structure to build the skills necessary for future success.

This skill acquisition means that students are more likely to succeed in classes, particularly smaller and more challenging seminar-style classes, where students are normally called upon to discuss a wide variety of subjects on relatively short notice. A student's ability to think for themselves as well as think on their feet can be an invaluable asset in middle school, high school, college, and life beyond academia.

The purpose of debate education should not necessarily be the indefinite continuation of formal debate practice. Students do not need to participate in an interscholastic debate team (if one is available) to reap the benefits of training in academic debate. In fact, introducing debate training in the classroom will give the students who might be less inclined to join a debate team a chance to develop the skills honed through debate practice.

Academic debate is a valuable exercise because it trains students to employ various component skills such as argument construction, evidence analysis, organization, outlining, persuasion, oral literacy, research skills, and teamwork.



THE BENEFITS OF DEBATING

The core purpose of promoting debate in high school is to begin to develop reasoned arguments and respectful discourse in a fun and engaging way. However, the amazing effort that students put in to the debate process through research, discussion, and careful consideration of topics leads to numerous other benefits beyond debate practice:



PROMOTION OF RIGOROUS CRITICAL THINKING

The development of critical thinking skills may be the most important benefit of high school debate practice. Several studies have reported that debate participation enhances critical thinking in students. Debate practice fosters problem solving, innovative thinking, and the ability to synthesize information.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

Participation in competitive debate can lead to improvement in a wide range of academic subjects and skills in older students, but informal debate can be useful for young children as well. Participants in debate excel in reading comprehension, as well as written and oral communication. Debate can provide access to new topics and points of view which gives students the background to tackle increasingly complex problems later in their academic careers.

DEVELOPMENT OF MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Debate requires students to disagree with one another in a mature and respectful manner. Students who engage in debate develop more mental and emotional maturity when dealing with adversity, which consequentially leads to stronger peer and mentor relationships.

PROMOTION OF ACADEMIC AND FUTURE OCCUPATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT

These skills, developed through engagement with debate practice, are crucial to students' success in academia and beyond. Debate students consistently receive higher grades throughout high school and college when compared to their peers. Improvement in academic performance is common to all debate students, regardless of their academic success prior to joining debate programs. Many students who are trained in debate go on to acquire advanced degrees and excel in their professional fields later in life.



SKILLS LEARNED FROM DEBATE

Research Competence

Research is a crucial component of debate for students. Although primary school debating will require less research, this is a great opportunity to begin to show your students how to find information online and in the school library. As such, they learn the basics of research techniques and resources that will be invaluable for the rest of their academic careers and life challenges.

Reading Comprehension

Debate forces students to come face-to-face with information they might never consume otherwise. The debate process challenges students to tackle reading materials that would usually be considered above their level academically.

Argument Literacy

Students gain “argument literacy” when they begin to be able to recognize and understand the component parts of an argument. This skill is key to students understanding and reasoning. This will be less complex and structured in the lower grades but debating motivates young students to consider why they think what they do and how they can explain their points of view.

Evidence Evaluation

Similarly, building research competence and media literacy increases students’ ability to effectively evaluate sources of evidence. Debate fosters critical thinking skills, which hones a student’s sensitivity to bias and recognition of reputable sources.

Summarization and Outlining

Debate requires students to synthesize and organize their arguments in order to present them in a cohesive and persuasive manner. Debate can, therefore, be a first step to teaching students how to organize their thoughts. This can help to improve students’ abilities to write and speak persuasively in later life.

Public Speaking

As speaking in front of other students is a major component of debate, students learn both rehearsed and impromptu speaking skills. Further, debating can enhance primary school children’s self confidence and willingness to speak up to voice their opinions.

Floor Management and Civility

Debate puts students in a position to address each other over something they disagree on in a formal and respectful manner. Developing this core social competence predicts success in every area of school and life at every age.

Active Listening

Students are never too young to begin learning this critical skill and successful debating requires its development.

Emotional Control

Learning to channel emotional energy into clear thinking is part of learning to handle an opponent’s moves and strategies in a debate.

Articulate Reasoning

Being able to marshal facts, evidence and logic while speaking is a skill that comes naturally to many young children – often to the dismay of parents dealing with their child’s logic. When Debate is included as an activity many young children move easily into ‘debate mode’.

Tolerance & Empathy

Young people learn from debate that you have to learn to put yourself “in the other person’s shoes” in order to be able to understand their arguments well enough to defeat them. These skills then generalize to a more active understanding of others.

Cultural Intelligence

Debating can expose children to levels of interaction with other children from very different cultural backgrounds in ways that they would not normally experience and can contribute to greater cultural awareness and understanding.

Non-confrontational Assertion

Debate teaches children how to operate within the rules while also putting forth their position as successfully as possible; learning to make a forceful point in an assertive but ‘soft’ manner can score points with judges, and in life.

Fact-based Reasoning

Debate teaches children how to research, organize and present factual materials in support of a point of view – not necessarily one that they share.

REAL WORLD RESULTS OF DEBATE

In his seminal paper "Debate: Important for Everyone", Alfred C. Snider of the University of Vermont observes that:

"Academic performance by African Americans in the USA is an example of an education system failing an important population. Fewer than half of African American high school students finish school. Debate can make a real difference. Mezuk (2009) examines data from Chicago Public Schools and the Chicago Debate League from 1997 to 2006. Overall, more than three quarters of debaters graduate, compared to barely half of non-debaters. The effects for African American males are even bigger: African American males who participate in debate are 70 percent more likely to graduate and three times less likely to drop out than their peers."

"A variety of other studies have confirmed these findings. According to the National Association for Urban Debate Leagues compendium of research (NAUDL 2010). Studies of students in Chicago, Kansas City, St. Louis, Seattle and New York (2004) concluded, "Academic debate improves performance at statistically significant levels on reading test scores, diminishes high-risk behaviors, and improves academic success and student attitudes towards higher education."

In Minnesota, another 2005 study found:

- *Debaters scored 36% higher on the reading post-test than on the pre-test. This improvement is 61% greater than improvements among the comparison group.*
- *80% of debaters reported no attendance problems compared to 49.02% with no reported attendance problems among the comparison group.*
- *Debaters averaged 15% higher self-esteem than the comparison group, and this boost in self-esteem was positively correlated with the duration of debate participation: the longer he/she debated, the wider the differential.*
- *By the end of their first year of debate, 100% of the debaters reported an increased interest in their classes.*
- *Compared to the comparison group, 87% of debaters were better able to analyze information.*
- *On a 4.0 scale, the gross average of debaters' 2006 GPAs was 2.97, compared to 2.5875 among the comparison group. Returning debaters averaged a 0.13 increase in their GPAs, while returning comparison group members lost an average of 0.10 points.*
- *100% of Minneapolis urban debate league debaters were unlikely to engage in negative risk behavior (drug use, early pregnancy, and alcohol). Debaters scored the highest possible score on this indicator."*

An Experiment With Classroom Debating (from Alfred Snider)

"One of the earliest results from the application of debating as a technique to use in classrooms teaching non-debate subjects was gathered in Providence, Rhode Island by Frank Duffin (2005). He was the principal of the school, so he was able to make broad changes in the way courses were taught.

- *He divided the school into three groups: A debate across the curriculum used heavily in classes, B debate across the curriculum used sparingly in classes and C debate across the curriculum used not at all in classes.*
- *He took baseline information from the entire school in 2002.*
- *In 2003, after the program had begun, the results were mixed. In basic reading comprehension, students in group A finished 20% ahead of Group B [24 vs. 20] and 33% ahead of group C [24 vs. 16.7].*
- *In 2004 students in A gained an additional advantage, rising to a score of 28 while the other two group reading comprehension scores had actually fallen.*
- *In a study of student ability to analyze and interpret world problems, all three groups improved from a score of 9.5 in 2002 to a score of 12 in 2003, but then the differences really emerged and in 2004 students in group A improved to 20 while group B improved to only 14 and group C scores actually declined.*
- *At this point parents of those in group C demanded that their students be included in the debate across the curriculum method and the experiment was discontinued.*



ACHIEVING THE COMMON CORE IDEAL THROUGH DEBATE TRAINING

Common Core standards (<http://www.corestandards.org/>) represent a set of achievable ideals, not an abstract set of ideas about how things should be. They are intended to help us know, as parents, teachers and students, what our schools should be helping us all achieve. Many schools, just like many of us, sometimes fall short of the goal, but research study after study now has shown that forming a debate program in any school is a guaranteed platform for increased student success. That's why it's so important to see these CC standards in the context of a debate program – these standards represent skills and competencies that every debater learns to master.

As you read the following selected CC standards please keep in mind that participation in debate has been proven beyond doubt to enhance any and every student's ability to read, think, collaborate, communicate, speak, research, write and reason at these ideal levels of achievement. In order to compete successfully in debate a student must master every one of these abilities, and they are all encompassed and underpinned by the basic ability to read and comprehend, both skills that lie at the core of effective debating and of a successful life.

- *“Being able to read complex text independently and proficiently is essential for high achievement in college and the workplace and important in numerous life tasks. Moreover, current trends suggest that if students cannot read challenging texts with understanding—if they have not developed the skill, concentration, and stamina to read such texts—they will read less in general.”*
- *In particular, if students cannot read complex expository text to gain information, they will likely turn to text-free or text-light sources, such as video, podcasts, and tweets. These sources, while not without value, cannot capture the nuance, subtlety, depth, or breadth of ideas developed through complex text.*
- *As Adams (2009) puts it, “There may one day be modes and methods of information delivery that are as efficient and powerful as text, but for now there is no contest. To grow, our students must read continually, and more specifically they must read lots of ‘complex’ texts—texts that offer them new language, new knowledge, and new modes of thought”.*
- *A turning away from complex texts is likely to lead to a general impoverishment of knowledge. This bodes ill for the ability of Americans to meet the demands placed upon them by citizenship in a democratic republic and the challenges of a highly competitive global marketplace of goods, services, and ideas.”*
Common Core State Standards Initiative

These capabilities are critical for a fulfilling adult life, and debate experience can make a tangible difference in virtually any student's level of achievement, whatever their innate capabilities may be. As CCS points out “The research shows that while the complexity of reading demands for college, career, and citizenship have held steady or risen over the past half century, the complexity of texts students are exposed to has steadily decreased in that same interval.” Preparing for and performing effectively in debate events can make the difference between a successful high school graduate and student whose life is blighted by a school system that has failed them.



CC STANDARDS FOR COMPREHENSION AND COLLABORATION:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1

The student can initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.A

The student comes to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.B

The student works with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.C

The student propels conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic

or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1.D

The student responds thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2

The student can integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.3

The student can evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.

CC STANDARDS FOR PRESENTATION OF KNOWLEDGE AND IDEAS:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4

The student can present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.5

The student can make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual,

and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.6

The student works with peers The student can adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

HOW TO USE DEBATE IN THE CLASSROOM



Debate is based on simple, logical concepts and does not need to be conducted in a formal and rigid way.

Debate in the high school classroom can be a way to facilitate the development of public speaking skills, critical thinking, research skills, and the ability to work with peers toward a common goal.

“It is possible to develop competency in debate without speech training. There is no question, however, that a student’s competence in debate will develop more rapidly if accompanied by some training in public speaking. If you choose to get right into debates, this competence in public speaking will come with time and practice.

“Debate is often seen as more intimidating and more difficult than public speaking. To some extent, this perception is correct. Unlike public speaking, there is an expectation that the participant will react to and challenge contentions made by other speakers (opponents). What we are dealing with here is the challenge of learning to be resourceful thinkers who can synthesize ideas and quickly articulate them. If you think about it, this is one of the most basic, but important, skills that educators can offer students. Although you may be more familiar with formal, college level debate, debate can be conducted in the classroom to facilitate research and discussion of subjects in the curriculum.” (From: americandebateleague.com)

Formal debate often involves two teams of two or three people speaking in a specific order, but that’s just one type of debate. The whole debating process is extremely flexible and whatever works for your class is what is best – forcing an uncomfortable process like formal debate on a group of kids who would much rather be having fun may not be the best way to start out a debate program. Teachers we know have found that simply giving an opinion, clearly labeled as such, on an issue you know your class is aware of, asking them to raise their hands if they agree or disagree, and then following with question & discussion time can be a good starting point for introducing what can easily and naturally can turn into debate. You could use mini-debates method as a fun exercise to get your students thinking, a way of teaching another part of your curriculum, or as an introduction to teaching more formal debate. You will have to consider the maturity of your students, the time available, and the number of students in deciding what works for your class.

What is Debating?

A debate is a structured argument. Two sides speak alternately for and against a particular contention usually based on a topical issue. Unlike the arguments you might have with your family or friends however, each person is allocated a time they are allowed to speak for and any interjections are carefully controlled. The subject of the dispute is often prearranged so you may find yourself having to support opinions with which you do not normally agree. You also have to argue as part of a team, being careful not to contradict what others on your side have said.

Why Debate In School?

It is an excellent way of improving speaking skills and is particularly helpful in providing experience in developing a convincing argument. Those of you who are forced to argue against your natural point of view realize that arguments, like coins, always have at least two sides.

SPEAKING: A BASIC DEBATING SKILL

Debate is about much more than how effectively you can speak but being able to speak well is always the beginning and often the end of debating success. Judges are human, and a clear, pleasant, intelligent speaker will always gain points for those qualities whatever the judge feels about the quality of their arguments and evidence. The key to success in speaking is simple – but not easy. The key is practice – in every situation, at every opportunity. The good news is that it isn't difficult to support, or help to create, a debate program in every school that will empower students to become successful speakers. That's why we've created this guide – are you enjoying it so far? We certainly hope so!

Speaking of speaking, here's a national speakers association review of the key elements of effective speaking, presenting and arguing. They're offered in a tone of 'advice to the student' that makes them a very useful guide.

Style Matters

Style is the manner in which you communicate your arguments. This is the most basic part of debating to master. Content and strategy are worth little unless you deliver your material in a confident and persuasive way.

Speed – Not Too Fast; Not Too Slow

It is vital to talk at a pace which is fast enough to sound intelligent and allow you time to say all that you want, but slow enough to be easily understood. "Cramming" too many ideas into a speech simply doesn't work, and it's impossible to sound confident or reasoned if you're trying it.

Tone – Make Yourself Interesting

Varying tone is what makes you sound interesting. Listening to one tone for an

entire presentation is boring. You should consider what kind of tone will be most appropriate – today many audiences like a more relaxed and conversational tone.

Volume – Keep In Under Control

Speaking quite loudly is sometimes a necessity, but it is by no means necessary to shout through every debate regardless of context. There is absolutely no need to speak any more loudly than the volume at which everyone in the room can comfortably hear you. Shouting does not win debates. Speaking too quietly is clearly disastrous since no one will be able to hear you. However, there can be moments when dramatically lowering your voice may be effective – experience is the only teacher in this matter.

Clarity – You Must Be Understood Before You Can Win

The ability to concisely and clearly express complex issues is what debating is all about. The main reason people begin to sound unclear is usually because they lose the “stream of thought” which is keeping them going. It is also important to keep it simple. While long words may make you sound clever, they may also make you incomprehensible and your risk of mis-pronouncing goes up.

Use of notes

Notes are essential, but they must be brief and well organized to be effective. Most people sketch out the main headings of their speech, with brief notes under each. There is little point in trying to speak without notes unless, of course, that is the point of the

event. Notes should never become obtrusive and damage your contact with the audience, nor should they ever be read from verbatim. They should be secure – flying notes are a terrible distraction and the speaker’s scramble to find the right place to resume among the hopelessly entangled notes can provoke laughter.

When writing notes for rebuttal during the debate, it is usually better to use a separate sheet of paper so you can take down the details of what the other speakers have said and then transfer a rough outline onto the notes you will actually be using.

Eye contact

Eye contact with the audience is very important, but keep shifting your gaze. No one likes to be stared at.

KEY ELEMENTS OF DEBATE – THE CONTENT

Content is what you actually say in the debate. The arguments used to develop your own side’s case and rebut the opposite side’s. The information on content provided below is a general overview of what will be expected when you debate. **The final logistics of how long you will be debating, how many people will be in your group, and how the debate will unfold (ie: which team speaks first etc.), will all be decided by your tutorial leader.**

Presenting Your Case (argument): Overview

Introduction - The case your group is making must be outlined in the introduction. This involves stating your main arguments and explaining the general thrust of your case. This must be done briefly since the most important thing is to get on and actually argue it. It is also a good idea to indicate the aspects of the subject to be discussed by each of the team members.

Conclusion - At the end, once everyone has spoken, it is useful to briefly summarize what your group has said and why.

Presenting Your Case (argument)- The Key Parts

Having outlined the whole of your argument, you must then begin to build a case (the parts). The best way to do this is to divide your case into between two and four arguments (or divide your case based on the number of people in your group). You must justify your arguments with basic logic, worked examples, statistics, and quotes. Debating is all about the strategy of “proof”. Proof, or evidence, supporting your assertion is what makes it an argument. There are a number of ways of dividing up cases according to groups of arguments (eg political/economic/social or moral/practical or international/

regional etc.) or just according to individual arguments if you can’t group any together. Under each of these basic headings you should then explain the reasoning behind the argument and justify it using the methods outlined above. It is usually best to put the most important arguments first.

Here is an example of a case outline:

- *The media exert more influence over what people think than the government does. This is true for **three** reasons.*
- **Firstly**, *most people base their votes on what they see and hear in the media.*
- **Secondly**, *the media can set the political agenda between elections by deciding what issues to report and in how much detail.*
- **Thirdly**, *the media have successfully demonized politicians over the last ten years so that now people are more likely to believe journalists than politicians.*

All of the arguments in this case outline are debatable (almost immediately you can see the counter-arguments), but they give the case a wide range which cover all kinds of issues. The trick is not to come up with a watertight case, but a well argued one. Think: “Can I argue that?”

Presenting Your Rebuttal – Overview

It is very important to have a good perspective of the debate and to identify what the key arguments are. It isn't enough to rebut a few random arguments here and there. Of course the techniques used above are invaluable but they must be used appropriately. There are a number of things you should do to systematically break down a team's case:

1. Ask yourself how the other side have approached the case. Is their methodology flawed?
2. Consider what tasks the other side set themselves (if any) and whether they have in fact addressed these.
3. Consider what the general emphasis of the case is and what assumptions it makes. Try to refute these.
4. Take the main arguments and do the same thing. It is not worth repeating a point of rebuttal that has been used by someone else already, but you can refer to it to show that the argument has not stood up. It is not necessary to correct every example used. You won't have time and your aim is to show the other side's case to be flawed in the key areas.

Presenting Your Rebuttal – The Key Parts

Having outlined Arguments can be factually, morally or logically flawed. They may be misinterpretations or they may also be unimportant or irrelevant. A team may also contradict one another or fail to complete the tasks they set themselves. These are the basics of rebuttal and almost every argument can be found wanting in at least one of these respects. Here are a few examples:

Here is an example of a case outline:

1. "Compulsory euthanasia at age 70 would save the country money in pensions and healthcare." This is true, but is morally flawed.
2. "Banning cigarette product placement in films will cause more young people to smoke because it will make smoking more mysterious and taboo." This is logically flawed, the ban would be more likely to stop the steady stream of images which make smoking seem attractive and glamorous and actually reduce the number of young people smoking.
3. "My partner will then look at the economic issues..."
"Blah..blah..blah...(5 minutes later and still no mention of the economic issues)" This is a clear failure to explain a major part of the case and attention should be drawn to it.

Even better is when a speaker starts with, "to win this debate there are three things I must do...". If the speaker fails to do any of those things you can then hang her or him by the noose by repeating their exact words – by his or her own admission he or she cannot have won the debate.

(From: americandebateleague.com)



CREATING GOOD DEFINITIONS

Inexperienced speaking debaters tend to waste too much of their speaking time defining terms so you must always decide whether you need to define a term. Ask yourself: will my speech be confusing if I don't define this term? Could the opposition misinterpret what I mean without a definition? For example, the motion could be "we should ban plastic bags". Unfortunately if that's the motion it isn't going to work because it's not clear what "plastic bags" we're referring to – all bags, some bags, what kind??? - and what does "ban" mean mean? Banned how? By who?

TWO FACTORS WHICH DETERMINE THE DEFINITION OF THE DEBATE:

1. Context - what is happening in the area that relates to this issue? For example, maybe the government of a country is debating banning smoking in public buildings and you decide to define the term "passive smoking" during the debate. If a significant event related to the topic has occurred then it should be the focus of the debate, for instance, a shocking report may have recently been revealed in the media showing the widespread effects of second-hand smoking.

2. Spirit of the motion - topics are chosen for a reason so what sort of debate was imagined when the topic was chosen? Looking at the spirit of the motion will ensure that you pick a definition that will produce a well-balanced and important debate.

If the topic is vague then you will have more choice of definitions. You have a duty to pick a clear definition and one that will create a good debate. If not, this may cause a definitional challenge which will ruin the debate and frustrate the judges.

For example, the topic may be "we spend too much money on the stars". Stars can refer to celebrities or astronomy so you need to choose a definition.

1. Look at the context and see if there has been a recent significant event related to either topics - the media is the best place to look.

2. Then apply second test - which definition will lead to the best debate, which will be more interesting and debatable?

If one answer passes both tests then that's your definition. If they tie then either is a good definition.

When providing your definition explain the context used to form the definition. This is important because your understanding of the context may be different from others due to various factors, such as, religion, culture, gender etc.





LEARNING OUTCOMES FROM DEBATE

- Discuss issues of major concern.
- Use a discussion of the familiar as the basis of a more formal or objective exploration of a topic or concept.
- Listen to a presentation on a topic, decide through discussion which questions are the most appropriate to ask, and then prioritize them.
- Argue points of view from the perspective of agreement and disagreement through informal discussion and in the context of formal debates.
- Justify and defend opinions or attitude and try to persuade others to support a point of view.
- Respond to arguments presented by the teacher.
- Discuss the value, truth, or relevance of popular ideas, positions, or causes.

**“It is better to debate
a question without
settling it than to
settle a question
without debating it.”**

- Joseph Joubert-

GENERIC DEBATE FORMAT



An in-class debate can mirror a league tournament or be more informal, depending on what works for your class. Though the structure of high school classroom debate may vary, all debate formats have the following in common:

- **There is a *resolution of policy or value* that provides the basic substance of the discussion.**

The terms of this resolution will be defined by the first speaker of the debate.

Examples of resolutions:

- Cats are better than dogs
- We should have universal healthcare provided by the state
- Public schools should have uniforms

- **There are two teams representing each resolution**

Those in favor of In favor of the resolution (Support/Affirmative)

and those against (Opposition or Negative)

- **The team in Support/Affirmative always has the burden to prove its side (burden of proof).**
- **The debate closes with final rebuttals on both sides which summarize their respective positions.**

DEBATE OUTLINE AND TIME SHEET

FIRST PROPOSITION CONSTRUCTIVE – 5 MINUTES

This speaker makes a case for the motion for debate, providing a proof of the topic with 3-4 major points.

FIRST OPPOSITION CONSTRUCTIVE – 5 MINUTES

This speaker makes several arguments against the proposition's case and refutes the proposition's major points.

SECOND PROPOSITION CONSTRUCTIVE – 5 MINUTES

This speaker will rebuild and expand upon the proposition's position. This speaker must enhance the original position while refuting the opposition's major arguments against the case.

SECOND OPPOSITION CONSTRUCTIVE – 5 MINUTES

This speaker should enhance the position of the opposition by providing new information that supports the opposition's position. This speaker should answer the proposition's responses to the opposition's earlier criticisms.

OPPOSITION REBUTTAL – 3 MINUTES

This speaker is responsible for pulling the arguments made in the debate together and explaining why the opposition should win. This rebuttal should finalize the refutation of the proposition's major points.

PROPOSITION REBUTTAL – 3 MINUTES

This speaker should summarize the issues discussed in the debate and explain why the proposition should win the debate. This rebuttal should refute the opposition's major points.

ACTIVITY ONE: WHERE DO YOU STAND?

PURPOSE

This activity invites students to form an opinion on a particular issue, to not be afraid to let others know where they stand, to give reasons for their opinion, and to do so after discussion with others.

MATERIALS

Four sheets of chart paper, each labelled in large letters with one of the following:

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Number of class periods: one

PREPARATION

Place one of the four sheets in each corner of the room. Prepare a list of statements upon which you want students to take a stance. This activity is best suited to an area where students can move about freely such as a hall or gymnasium.

ACTIVITY

Gather the class in the center of the room and point out the four sheets in each of the corners.

Tell the students that you are going to read out several statements and that you want the students to stand in the corner that best describes how they feel about the statement.

EXAMPLES OF STATEMENTS ARE:

- School uniforms should be banned
- Homework is good for us
- There is nothing I can do about climate change

Encourage students to voice their opinions from their respective corners. Ask them to explain why they chose the corners they picked.

After some discussion from each of the corners, ask the students if any would like to change corners. Ask them what was said that convinced them to switch.

Invite each group to work together to write a clear statement explaining their position.

ACTIVITY TWO:

WHAT IS DEBATE ABOUT?

PURPOSE

The purpose of this unit is to introduce students to some of the basic concepts and terms involved in debate and to the idea that there are at least two sides to every argument.

MATERIALS

You will not need any special materials beyond what is already in your classroom.

Number of class periods: one

ACTIVITY

Begin by asking students a few lead-in questions, such as:

- *What is debate?*
- *Why is debate important? How is it useful?*
- *What sorts of people debate for a living?*

Students will invariably respond that lawyers and/or politicians are the primary people who use debate. This is a good opportunity to point out that the abilities to resolve issues and articulate points of view are skills that everyone needs. Ask your students:

- *In what situations might debate skills be useful?*
- *Who needs these skills?*

Continue the discussion by describing and/or asking for some of the terms that are frequently used in debate.

Affirmative and Negative

There are two sides in a debate, known as the Affirmative (or In Support) and the Negative (or Opposition). The terms “pro” and “con” and “for” and “against” are also acceptable terms.

The Resolution

The subject to be discussed is known by several terms: the resolution (the most commonly used term), the proposition, the Bill, the measure, or the issue.

Resolutions are, in Parliamentary debate, preceded by the expression

“Be It Resolved That (or B.I.R.T.)”

The two most common types of resolutions are resolutions of value and resolutions of policy.

Resolutions or propositions of value generally deal with a philosophical question and are worded as positive statements. For example:

- *B.I.R.T. lying is always morally wrong*
- *B.I.R.T. dogs are better than cats.*

Resolutions or propositions of policy generally deal with changing the current of established aspect of society (the “status quo”). These are worded in the imperative form. For example:

- *B.I.R.T. environmental laws be stricter*
- *B.I.R.T. a poll tax should be introduced.*

You should ask the students to provide examples of both types of resolutions until they clearly understand the difference.

QUESTION

RESOLUTION

“Are these the best of all times?”	B.I.R.T these are the best of all times.
“Are women better than men?”	B.I.R.T women are better than men.
“Is truth more important than beauty?”	B.I.R.T truth is more important that beauty.
“Does the best government govern least?”	B.I.R.T the best government governs least.



DEBEATE (OF VALUE OR POLICY)

Government/Affirmative	Opposition/Negative
Seeks to promote change	Seeks to Clash



The Affirmative in a debate proposes or supports the resolution. In a policy debate, the Affirmative is trying to change things.

The job of the Negative in any type of debate is to oppose and clash with the Affirmative.

(This is the essence of debate. All other concepts will flow from this.)



ACTIVITY THREE: FIRST CLASSROOM DEBATE



During this exercise, we will be encouraging students to discuss a controversial issue. You may wish to determine the issue yourself, but it is better to get your students to suggest it or embrace it. You could provide a list of a few topics and allow the students to choose the one they feel most passionate about. It is important to pick a topic with two clear sides. Although debates often cover more complex issues with multiple sides and middle grounds, it is best to start simply. Be careful to pick a topic (value or policy), that will not offend or embarrass your students.

Once you have picked a topic, there are several ways in which to proceed.

Approach #1

Have the students form pairs. In each pair, designate one person as A and the second as B. A is given a set period (5 minutes) to outline why he or she supports the topic. B is given a set period to explain why he or she opposes the topic.

You should encourage the students to make notes on each other's points of view. You may also wish to give the students time to respond to one another's comments. Discuss the different views expressed; compare and contrast arguments.

Approach #2

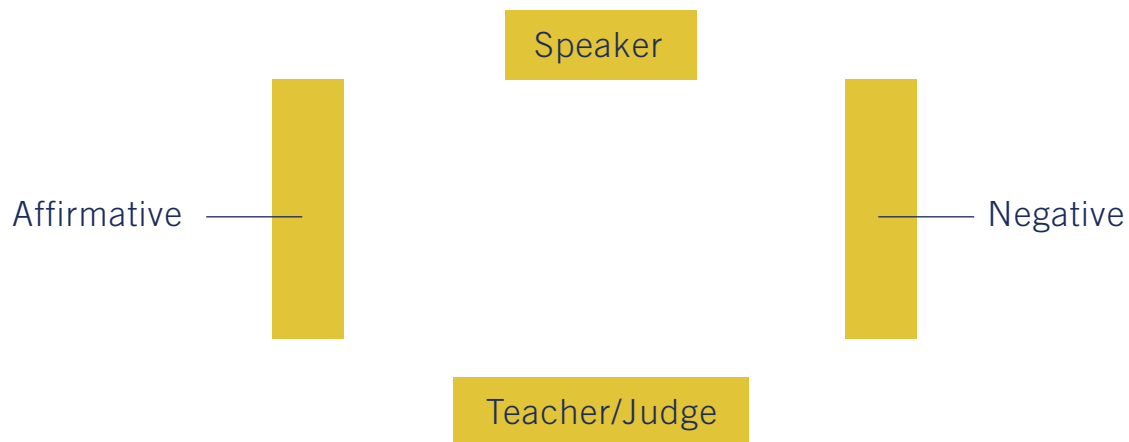
Have the students vote on whether they are opposed to or in favor of the resolution. After recording the vote, ask those in favor to each give a brief account of why they support the resolution. Then repeat this process with those students who oppose the resolution.

Try to encourage discussion between the two factions. If this does not occur naturally, you may wish to stimulate discussion by asking pertinent questions.

Conclude this unit by pointing out that the students have now taken part in an informal debate and that, over the next few classes, they will be learning more formal debate skills.

A TYPICAL ROOM LAYOUT FOR A DEBATE

Remember, the format is flexible. The teams may vary in size, the roles of the chairperson and the timer could be combined, and the number of judges needed will depend on the size of the debate.



A Role-Playing Debate

If you really want to challenge your students, a role-playing variation on debate may be right for your class. One of the most difficult argumentative skills to master is defending a position that is not your own. To conduct a role-playing debate, you can follow the format of a classic formal debate and assign students roles or positions to play. This kind of debate can help students more carefully consider opposing viewpoints and learn to develop stronger counterarguments.

FISHBOWL STYLE DEBATES

A fishbowl debate is a fantastic way to get your entire class involved in a single debate. Arrange two concentric circles of seats in the center of the room. The inner circle of students (those inside the “fishbowl”) are the speakers and will actively debate other students in the inner circle about the resolution at hand.

Behind each inner circle seat, a student is sitting in the outer circle and is expected to listen and take notes on the debate. At regular intervals, the inner and outer circles switch places so all students are engaged.

In some variations of the fishbowl style debate, the inner and outer circle students are partners and work together to take notes and build arguments as they would on a formal debating team. Other versions of this style also have a “hot seat,” or an empty chair in the inner circle that students from the outer circle may jump into if they have an immediate point to contribute.



FISHBOWL

Set up chairs in two concentric circles. The inner circle will be debating, while the outer circle will be taking notes. Switch every so often to make sure all students are engaged.

ADVANCED ACTIVITIES

EXPANDING ON THE CONCEPT

OBJECTIVES

- Observe a live or videotaped debate.
- Take part in an informational debate

NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS:

One for the first objective,
two for the second.

There are several possibilities for this unit:

You may wish to move on to the next unit and begin looking at how to structure a debate in more detail.

You may wish to arrange for a demonstration debate—either live or on video.

You may wish to have the students take part in some informal debates.

Let's assume (just for the sake of debate!) that you wish to do two and three before proceeding to a more detailed study of debate.



PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

DISCUSS WHAT YOU DO AND DO NOT SEE IN DEBATE VIDEOS:

The Judge: The judge is usually sitting behind the camera during broadcasted debates. The judge will be diligently taking notes on a flow sheet and timing the debate.

The Audience: Audience members are often present during filmed debates. Audience members cannot communicate with the debaters directly, but they may “heckle” the debaters.

WHAT YOU DO SEE:

The Proposition: The proposition sits to the left of the judge and makes a case for the motion.

The Opposition: The opposition sits to the right of the judge and argues against the case made by the proposition.

Heckling: Banging desks, shouting, ‘Hear! Hear!’ and saying, ‘Shame!’ are all appropriate forms of heckling during a debate. It is not appropriate to shame every argument made by an opposing team.

Use of Flow Sheets: The papers in front of the debaters are flow sheets. Debaters, judges, and audience members take notes on flow sheets to help them stay organized during a debate.

SHORT INFORMAL DEBATES

These short debates and, indeed, most debates in classrooms, can be conducted in a variety of ways.

Teams can be whatever size works for your class, from one person to half your class. With two-person teams, debates may be conducted one at a time in front of all students or all teams may debate simultaneously. The advantages of the latter is that everyone can debate in a much shorter span of time and students are not put in the position of having to sit and watch numerous other debates.

Having all the students involved in debating at once has the additional advantage that shyer students are not subject to a large audience during their first attempts at debate. The disadvantage of this approach is that you will need more than one venue.

In order to have multiple simultaneous debates it is necessary to break the class into groups of teams. A team is normally two or more students. (For the purposes of this resource document, we will be dealing primarily with two-person teams.) Each group should ideally contain four teams. A group of four teams will consist of two Affirmatives and two Negatives.

While one Affirmative and one Negative pair off, the other two teams may be involved in judging and chairing the debate. Let us call the two teams debating A and B and the two teams officiating C and D. Once A and B have debated, C and D debate while A and B officiate. If you end up with a cell of six students, or three teams, A, B and C, A and C may be Affirmative with B the Negative. You could then have a second round in which B challenges C and A officiates. Let's diagram a four-team cell for clarity.

1. Let's assume that you have 33 students in your class. We can make up 16 teams, 15 with two people and 1 with three people.
2. Number the teams 1 to 16, then designate odd-numbered teams Affirmative and even-numbered teams Negative.
3. Create cells of four teams, two Affirmative and two Negative. Let's assume that teams 1 to 4 are in this cell and that teams 1 and 3 are Affirmative and 2 and 4 are Negative.

4. The following sequence should now be possible:

	AFFIRMATIVE VS.	JUDGING (3	CHAIRING &
ROUND 1	Team 1 vs. Team 2	Team 3 + 1 from Team 4	1 from Team 4
ROUND 2	Team 3 vs. Team 4	Team 1 + 1 from Team 2	1 from Team 2

The chairperson's job is to:

- a) introduce all the participants and then to call on them in turn.
- b) act as the timer to indicate to the debaters how much time remains in their speeches.
- c) at the end of the debate, after judging is complete, announce the winning team.

Judges should:

- a) evaluate the debate based on the arguments and the refutation only.
 - b) each reach their conclusions independently.
- These preliminary debates should be short. It should be possible to get through the two rounds in one class.

You may wish to use a format such as this:

SPEAKER	TIME
First Affirmative	2 minutes
First Negative	2 minutes
Second Affirmative	2 minutes
Second Negative	2 minutes
Break for Preparation	2 minutes
Negative Summary/Rebuttal	2 minutes
Affirmative Summary/Rebuttal	2 minutes

Although the debate can be conducted in one period, you will note that two periods have been designated. The preliminary period should be used to allow the students to prepare and research.

It is often helpful when introducing a format such as the one above to give students a dry run. Set your space up in the correct configuration and have the students walk through the sequence of who speaks when, without actually speaking.

may be Affirmative with B the Negative. You could then have a second round in which B challenges C and A officiates. Let's diagram a four-team cell for clarity.

EXAMPLE OF A FLOW SHEET

Affirmative Constructive	Negative Constructive	1st Affirmative Rebuttal	Negative Rebuttal	2nd Affirmative Rebuttal
Your notes about the Affirmative Constructive go here.	The negative's attacks on the affirmative case are written here.	Jot down notes about the affirmative's rebuttal to the negative's attacks here.	Negative's response to the affirmative's rebuttal goes here.	Since the Affirmative only has three minutes for this speech, what usually happens is that instead of covering every argument on the flow, the affirmative simply selects a number of points to re-iterate, Jot them down here.
You can use this space to record possible questions to ask during the cross-examination.	This space contains notes about the negative case.	The affirmative's attacks on the negative's case go here.	The negative's responses to the affirmative's attacks go here. Also, any final points of summary can be recorded here as well.	

AFFIRMATIVE CASE STRUCTURE

Be It Resolved That (B.I.R.T)

OBJECTIVES

- To gain an understanding of the Affirmative philosophy.
- To examine the speech of the first Affirmative.

NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS: 1-2



For purposes of instruction, let's make two assumptions.

First, let's use a proposition of policy. A proposition of policy calls for a change to the way things are currently done.

For example:

- *B.I.R.T. United States increase its foreign aid.*
- *B.I.R.T. capital punishment not be allowed.*
- *B.I.R.T. all guns be banned.*

Second, let's use the following debate format:

SPEAKER
First Affirmative
First Negative
Second Affirmative
Second Negative
Discussion Period
Break for Preparation
Negative Summary/Rebuttal
Affirmative Summary/Rebuttal

CHANGE = NEED(S) FOR CHANGE + PLAN

In a policy debate the duties of the respective teams are clearly defined.

One of the teams, the Affirmative, always supports the resolution and is therefore advocating change.

Change consists of two elements:
The need for change and the plan
(a procedure for change).

For example, if you argue that capital punishment shouldn't be used, you must give compelling reasons (or needs for change) and then you must provide a plan. The plan must answer questions such as what will be used instead of capital punishment.

Once you are satisfied the students understand this concept, move to discussing the specific duties of the first Affirmative.

The first Affirmative speaker commands a most important role in the debate. This debater presents and clarifies the resolution for debate and is the first person to speak in favor of accepting the terms of the resolution.

The first Affirmative speaker therefore sets the initial tone and direction of the debate. The first Affirmative constructive speech is the only speech that can be prepared in its entirety before the debate.

FIRST AFFIRMATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE SPEECH

1. Introduction; state the resolution.
2. Define the terms of the resolution fairly, in such a way as to prevent ambiguities or "definitional debate" later in the competition. Choose straightforward language. Restate the resolution using your definitions in place of the original words/phrases.
3. Present the Affirmative need(s) for change by demonstrating flaws in the current system (or status quo).
4. Present evidence which affirms the needs for change.
5. Introduce a plan which initiates the necessary changes.



FIRST AFFIRMATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE SPEECH: A DETAILED EXAMINATION

1. INTRODUCTION

Get the audience's attention and introduce the subject. For example:

"Ladies and gentlemen, imagine, if you will, that you are going for supper at a friend's home. You arrive at the home, but no one answers the doorbell. The light is on and the door unlocked, so you go in. You are greeted by a horrifying sight: your friend has been murdered. After the police arrive they tell you they suspect an escaped murderer. This murderer killed a prison guard when he escaped; the police tell you that, had this individual been executed, your friend might be alive today. At present, the United States does allow capital punishment at the discretion of the states. The subject of the debate today is, "Be it resolved that capital punishment remain legal in the United States."

2. DEFINITION OF THE RESOLUTION

Depending on the topic, the words may be ambiguous. For example:

"what does capital punishment mean?" When students are asked this question they often respond with, "the death penalty" or "execution." This is essentially correct, but specific definitions are important in a debate context. The Affirmative team may define capital punishment along these lines: "Capital punishment is the death penalty carried out by the state for the crime of murder."

Providing definitions theoretically gives the Affirmative a slight advantage (to offset the disadvantage of having the more difficult side of the debate). Ask students to identify the terms they feel require defining, and have them suggest definitions. Encourage discussion on why one definition might be better than another.

3. PRESENT THE AFFIRMATIVE NEED(S) FOR CHANGE

This can be done by demonstrating flaws in the current system or status quo.

The needs for change are essentially the compelling reasons that will justify the plan. Typically, the Affirmative will have time to present three to five needs for change. In a debate on reinstating capital punishment, the needs for change might be:

- a. *The use of capital punishment ultimately saves money.*
- b. *The existence of capital punishment deters others from murdering.*
- c. *Most Americans are in favor of capital punishment in some circumstances.*
- d. *Murderers should forfeit their lives.*

Ask the students to suggest other needs for change and list them on the board.

4. PRESENT FACTUAL EVIDENCE THAT AFFIRMS THE NEEDS FOR CHANGE:

Novice teams will often limit their cases to simple recitations of points. Ideally each of the needs for change should be presented in three stages. The need should be stated, described in more detail, and finally evidence should be offered in support of the contention.

Ask students to elaborate on a need as they would during a debate. Ask questions if their explanations are inadequate. The biggest mistake debaters make is assuming that, because they understand an issue, their audience will understand it as well.

5. INTRODUCE A PLAN WHICH INITIATES THE NECESSARY CHANGES:

After presenting all the needs for change, the first Affirmative speaker usually has just enough time to give a brief outline of the plan before concluding the speech.

If there is a significant amount of time left, the first speaker will then present the plan. The Affirmative should provide at least an outline of the plan in its first presentation so the Negative team has an opportunity to respond to the proposed plan.

DEFINE THE TERMS OF THE RESOLUTION FAIRLY:

To prevent ambiguities or “definitional debate” later in the competition. Choose straightforward terminology. Restate the resolution using your definitions in place of the original words/phrases.



OVERVIEW OF NEGATIVE STRATEGY



OBJECTIVES

- To understand Negative strategy
- To understand the job of the first Negative speaker.

NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS: 1

The presentation by the first Negative is perhaps the most difficult in the entire debate. The job of the Negative may be more broadly described as clashing, using any means possible to convince the judges not to accept the Affirmative proposition. Some wild and wonderful strategies flow from this; however, outlandish strategies are better left to another presentation.

In clashing with the Affirmative, the Negative should consider the items listed below. You may discuss these concepts with your students, asking questions such as:

- What would happen if the Affirmative lacked evidence for its main points?
- Does the source of evidence affect its validity?
- Does the plan need to be a major change?

FIRST NEGATIVE CONSTRUCTIVE CHECKLIST

1. DEFINITIONS

If the Affirmative has failed to define any key terms of the resolution, you may offer definitions. If the Affirmative definitions are illogical or unreasonable, you must contest them immediately by providing compelling reasons to reject them. Otherwise, it is assumed that your team is in complete agreement with the terms as defined.

2. NEED(S) FOR CHANGE

Are the major needs for change supported by evidence or logic? Do not accept a need simply because the Affirmative says it is needed.

3. EVIDENCE

Is the evidence current and from a credible source? Usually, the more recent the evidence, the better. Also, attempt to identify reasons the source may be biased. For example, one would likely question the objectivity of a car manufacturer or petroleum company writing about the Kyoto (greenhouse gas) Accord.

4. THE PLAN: DOES IT SOLVE THE PROBLEM?

Does the plan constitute a significant change? Does the plan meet and solve the needs for change? For example: if a need raised in support of capital punishment is that murderers are escaping, the Negative might respond that the more rational plan is to increase the security of prisons.

5. THE PLAN: DOES IT CREATED NEW OR WORSE PROBLEMS?

Does the plan create new problems that potentially outweigh the suggested benefits of its implementation? For example: the Negative might attack capital punishment on the grounds that the jury would find the prospect of a capital sentence so repugnant they might acquit rather than convict, thereby creating a situation in which society was in greater peril as a result of reinstating capital punishment.

Unlike the first Affirmative speaker, the first Negative speaker can't draft a speech beforehand. Since the specifics of the first Affirmative speech are unknown before it is presented, "clash" requires special preparation.

There are three things that the Negative may do to prepare.

1. The first thing is to be familiar with the subject matter, to be aware of the potential Affirmative arguments, and to plan responses.
2. The second is to prepare documentation for the various Negative responses, knowing that the evidence prepared may not be used. This documentation is essentially quotations that may be used to support assertions made in the Negative speech. Each quotation should be recorded, along with its source, on an index card. The appropriate cards may then be retrieved and organized as the Negative speaker prepares comments.

Generally, the Negative will argue there is no need for change, or that any existing problems can be solved through small changes known as "minor repairs." (Yes, the Negative can make small changes!)

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT FAILS!

Studies of American states with and without capital punishment show that the murder rate per hundred thousand is marginally higher than states with capital punishment.

3. A third tool in the Negative's bag of tricks is called flowing. Traditional note-taking strategies are not effective for debating or for fairly tracking the ebb and flow of a debate. This is because debates arise from the relationship between arguments and their give and take during a debate. The flowsheet is your record of the debate. It is okay to use shorthand and cursive writing – your notes are primarily for you, although you may want to share them at some point. In theory, you should be able to use your flowsheet to reconstruct the debate afterward. This means it should be thorough and accurate, but it doesn't have to be neat or pretty as long as it can serve its purpose for you.

Although the use of the flow sheet is shown in two stages, generally Negative responses are written in response to Affirmative statements. Normally, one would not wait until the whole Affirmative case has been made before filling in the Negative side.

If the Affirmative case is still on the board or screen, it's useful to pretend that the board is a giant flow sheet and try to fill in the Negative responses on the board. It's a good idea to use the left side of the board or screen for the Affirmative and leave the right-side blank for the diagramming of the Negative argument.

AFFIRMATIVE SPEECH	NEGATIVE RESPONSE
Definition: Capital punishment = Death penalty imposed by state	OK
Needs: 1. Murder rate is climbing 2. Majority of citizens favor 3. Would save money	1. Murder rate higher in state with capital punishment 2. Government has voted twice to abolish 3. What is price of human life?
Plan: Lethal injection for first degree murder	Jurors acquit if capital punishment is option; therefore, more murderers go free

BUILDING ARGUMENTS

The essential parts of building an argument are assertion, reasoning, and evidence. An easy way to

Assertion
Reasoning
Evidence

The **Assertion** is a claim made about the world or a statement of position. Statements like, “homework should be banned,” or, “open borders are good for the U.S.,” are examples of assertions.

The second part of the argument is the **Reasoning**. An assertion on its own is not an argument; it is simply a baseless claim. In order to build an argument, the assertion needs to be supported. The Reasoning is the “because” part of the argument. For example, “homework should be banned because it interferes with effective learning,” could be the reasoning portion of an argument.

The final component of the argument is the **Evidence**. Evidence is used to back up the reasoning behind or provide proof of an argument. Evidence may take the form of simple examples or more formalized research, depending on the complexity of the topic. Making charts where students may organize their thoughts may be helpful.

EXAMPLE

Assertion:	The minimum driving age should be raised to eighteen.	The U.S. should not have the death penalty.
Reasoning:	Raising the driving age will save lives by reducing accidents.	Using the death penalty can lead to the death of innocent people.
Evidence:	Sixteen-year-old drivers are three times as likely to be in a crash than drivers aged eighteen and nineteen.	Since 1973, 108 people in 25 states have been released from death row after DNA evidence proved their innocence.

WHEN REASONING GOES BAD: LOGICAL FALLACIES

To be successful debaters, students will need to learn the difference between good argumentation and bad argumentation. Sometimes the reasoning part of an argument can, upon first inspection, seem fine but prove to be flawed if given a closer look. A “logical fallacy” is an incorrect conclusion arising from flawed reasoning. There are many kinds of logical fallacies, but the most common are:

The Appeal to Tradition

An argument that we should do something a certain way because it has always been done that way is not good reasoning. Although good reasons for preserving tradition in some circumstances exist, the simple fact that something has been done for a long time is not a strong argument.

The Appeal to Authority

Debaters should refer to reputable sources and authorities to support their arguments. If a student was arguing, for example, that the drinking age should not be lowered, they might reference a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control. However, saying that teenagers will always abuse alcohol because an article on Facebook said so is not a strong argument. Statements are not true simply because someone, somewhere previously said it.

The Straw Man Setup

the opposing team introduces an argument without serious intent, just to set up to rebut it. They may use an extreme example of your proposal or make a false projection of outcomes based on your argument – in any case you should “call out” this tactic at the first opportunity.

The Fallacy of False Cause

This logical fallacy occurs when a speaker says that one thing happened and another thing happened, so therefore the first thing caused the second. Order in time does not prove causality. It is weak reasoning to jump from correlation to causation in an argument.

The Fallacy of Self-Contradiction

this is a fallacy introduced into the argument when an opposing team contradicts one of their previous arguments. You should point out that the arguments cannot be true simultaneously and then explain how this reduces their case’s credibility.

The False dichotomy

this is where the speaker is trying to divide the debate into only two sides even though there are more alternatives than they state. It’s likely the speaker is doing this on purpose but in some cases they do not understand the debate.

False Projections

The opposition asks rhetorically “What would happen if what the other team is suggesting were implemented?” and then proceeds to supply a description of consequences that would forcefully (and wrongly) invalidate the proposition being advanced.

The False Assertion

this is when a speaker presents a statement which isn't actually an argument because they offer no reason to believe that the statement is valid. You can point out that there has not been enough evidence offered to prove the assertion's validity and then show your own evidence of why the assertion is not valid.

The Morally Flawed Argument

Arguments can be morally flawed, for example, "Convicted violent criminals should be given the death penalty because taxpayers should not have to support them in prison." What has been argued may be accurate or true but it's obviously morally flawed.

The fallacy of composition

The fallacy of composition occurs when a debater assumes in his or her argument that what is true of the part is also true of the whole. For example, just because seven people in your class are great at art does not mean that the entire class is great at art.

The fallacy of division

The fallacy of division is the inverse of the fallacy of composition. It occurs when a debater assumes that something that is true of the whole is also true of all of its parts. For example, it may be that the average American family has 2.5 children, but that does not mean that the Jones family down the street has two children and a half child.

Using Class Discussions As Foundational Debating Exercises

OBJECTIVES

To acquaint students with the nature of the discussion period.

NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS: 1-2

Begin by briefly summarizing the first Affirmative and Negative speeches. During the discussion period the team members ask one another questions.

The questions serve several purposes, such as seeking information, probing areas of weakness, analyzing evidence and clarifying points.

The "head-to-head" character of this activity encourages thorough preparation on the part of the participants. (The discussion period in and of itself can be an interesting class activity.)

Discuss with students the types of questions one might ask,

1. *What opportunities does the discussion period provide?*
2. *Discuss what sort of questions might be relevant with respect to the subject that you are using to introduce debate.*

Divide the students into two groups (Affirmative and Negative). Physically divide the class so that Affirmative faces Negative with a space in the middle. Appoint a student to be chairperson. Have the two sides ask and answer questions on the subject that you have been using for debate instruction. To ask or answer a question, students must raise their hands.

To incorporate class involvement in a particular debate, all students could take part in the discussion period. For a second class period you could show two 15 minute videos.

OVERVIEW OF DEBATE

OBJECTIVES

To set the first two speeches into the larger context of the debate and summarize the remaining speeches.

NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS: 1

Begin by briefly summarizing the first Affirmative and Negative speeches. summarizing the first Affirmative and Negative speeches.

Second Affirmative Constructive Speech

The second Affirmative speech is the first opportunity the Affirmative team has to directly address the arguments made by the Negative team. It is also the Affirmative's last chance to present new contentions which support the resolution and their proposal.

The approach is to:

- Attack the Negative philosophy while defending the Affirmative perspective.
- Clash! Directly address each of the specific challenges issued by the Negative. Explain why the Affirmative's evidence should be accepted as authoritative.
- Detail and defend the Affirmative plan.
- Describe the benefits of the plan. (If you were using three-person teams, this could be done by the third person.
- Anticipate the second Negative's points, and further clarify the Affirmative position in contra-distinction.

In the case of capital punishment, the plan would have to answer such questions as:

- What method of capital punishment would be used?
- For what crimes would capital punishment be used?
- Would the judge have discretion in sentencing?

Second Negative Constructive Speech

This final constructive speech of the debate gives the second Negative speaker an opportunity not only to criticize the Affirmative plan, but also to present the final contentions that complete the Negative case.

The approach is to:

1. Attack the Affirmative plan as unworkable, undesirable, unable to solve the needs, and/or unnecessary.
2. Deny the supposed benefits of the plan.
3. Clash. Counter all Affirmative challenges directly and specifically.
4. Refute the Affirmative case as a whole. Defend and strengthen Negative arguments, including those presented earlier by your partner. Try to refine and solidify your best points without sounding repetitive.

This ends the constructive portion of the debate. The debate now moves into what is called the discussion period. We will discuss this later and press on with the rebuttals.

The Break

Both sides may use this time to review the debate and focus their ideas for the concluding speeches.

- A well-developed final speech requires teamwork; both debaters on a team should be fully involved in contributing ideas.
- The rebuttals are extremely important because they are the last opportunity for each team to convince the judges before the final evaluation.
- The rebuttal speeches are for response and refutation only; they are used to review and crystallize central issues by challenging the other side's strongest arguments and tracing the progression of important contentions.

Although new evidence or sources may be used to strengthen ideas introduced in the constructive speeches, no new contentions may be presented. This ensures teams do not wait until the end of the debate to introduce new ideas their opponents would not have ample time to refute.

Rebuttal by First Negative

1. *Begin by reviewing major case arguments presented in the first Negative speech. Apply additional evidence and logic to reaffirm why arguments that have come under Affirmative attack still stand.*
2. *Remind the judges of any significant Negative attacks the second Affirmative has failed to rebut.*
3. *Attack the Affirmative plan from all possible angles: needs for change, course of action, benefits, and overall justification.*
4. *Clearly, concisely, and forcefully summarize the Negative's key points.*

Rebuttal by First Affirmative

1. *Execute final attack on Negative case while defending Affirmative needs for change, plan, benefits, and philosophy.*
2. *Briefly review your case, restating powerful points in favor of the adoption of the resolution. Make sure you try to counteract successful Negative closing arguments and that you indicate where the Negative team failed to advance argumentation.*

Note: If three-person teams are used, the third person could be responsible for the rebuttal. Some formats of debate allow each team member to give a rebuttal speech.

For example:

1st Negative rebuttal, 1st Affirmative rebuttal, 2nd Negative rebuttal, 2nd Affirmative rebuttal



MORE DISCUSSIONS IN DETAIL

OBJECTIVES

To acquaint students with the nature of the discussion period.

NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS: 1-2

Begin by briefly summarizing the first Affirmative and first Negative speeches.

During the discussion period the team members ask one another questions.

The questions serve several purposes, such as seeking information, probing areas of weakness, analyzing evidence, and clarifying points.

The “head-to-head” character of this activity encourages thorough preparation on the part of the participants.

Discuss with students the types of questions one might ask.

1. *What opportunities does the discussion period provide?*
2. *Discuss what sort of questions might be relevant with respect to the subject you are using to introduce debate.*

Divide the students into two groups (Affirmative and Negative). Physically divide the class so that Affirmative faces Negative with a space between them. Appoint a student to be chairperson. Have the two sides ask and answer questions on the subject you have been using for debate instruction. To ask or answer a question, students must raise their hands.

To incorporate class in involvement in a particular debate, all students could take part in the designated discussion period.

For a second class period, you could show two 15 minute videos.

THE GREAT DEBATE

OBJECTIVES

To give students an opportunity to prepare and debate in a formal style.

NUMBER OF CLASS PERIODS:

2-4 classes to do research, depending on the level of research and preparation. Begin by briefly summarizing the first Affirmative and Negative speeches.

The number of classes to present the debates will depend upon whether you wish each debate to take place in front of the class or whether you use a format that allows multiple debates to occur at once (described earlier). Whichever format you use, there will only be time for one round of competition in a single class period. If you use a multiple class format, you will need two classes to allow everyone a chance to debate.

For the purposes of these debates, a modified discussion format is recommended as follows:

SPEAKER	TIME (MIN.)
1st Affirmative constructive speech	37319
2nd Negative constructive speech	37319
1st Affirmative constructive speech	64
2nd Negative constructive speech	64
Discussion period	37350
Break	37350
Negative rebuttal	37289
Affirmative rebuttal	37289

Kinds of Debate

The most popular format of high school and university debate is parliamentary debate. In this format, participants assume the roles and conventions of members of the English House of Commons. This format lends itself to role-playing, and presentations tend to be more dramatic.

Another popular format used at the high school level in much of the United States is Cross-Examination. In this format, rather than having a discussion period, each speaker gives a constructive speech and is then cross-examined by a member of the opposing team. This often leads to exciting confrontation.

The previously described debate style is a discussion format. The debate format used, the sizes of teams, the lengths of speeches, and other factors can be modified for various purposes.

STARTING A FORMAL DEBATE TEAM

Formal Debating

We believe debating in classrooms is a beneficial form of teaching, and we also see great value in schools forming a debate-focused class and a competitive debate team.

Allow anyone who is interested to join the class. Though only a small number (four to eight) of students may take formal debate seriously, anyone who attends the class or coaching sessions will learn something valuable. Additionally, debate isn't just for high-performing students or for those with prior debate or public speaking experience. Debate can be an avenue for some students to discover their passion, and students with more experience can coach others new to the format. It's all about teamwork, after all.

Harvard never says no to anybody who wants to join the debating team. A sophomore who had never debated in her life joined them a few years ago and now has been a national champion twice.

Assembling the Team

To support a competitive team, you will need a foundation of people—teachers, staff, parents, and alumni. Anyone who previously debated during their school years will understand the importance of the effort. This team may include as few as five people, but 10 or 12 are ideal. More than 12 become difficult to manage. Within this team are a coach (likely a teacher) and assistant coach. The assistant coach should be ready at any time to act as had coach in the event the coach leaves the position. Parents can fulfill the important role of driving teams to and from debates. Volunteers may act as judges, a rather honorable (if at times controversial) position. To become a certified judge, volunteers may observe other debates, review our judging handbook, and then pass a test.

Keep your team meetings to a minimum to be respectful of volunteers' time. You don't really need equipment. Schools have much of what you need, including AV equipment, microphones, and video equipment. If they don't, use an iPhone.

Keep your foundation informed with an email detailing the happenings of the debate team, upcoming needs for volunteers, etc. Develop team pride with custom-designed T-shirts, pins, or whatever gets your team excited about debating (as a team).

FINDING & RECRUITING GREAT VOLUNTEER JUDGES

A successful debate depends on many factors, but having the right people serving as judges makes a debate really exciting and rewarding. Not only are good judges important for managing the flow of the debate but they also provide much of the educational value for the event through their decision-making and feedback.

Participants use all their skills and passion in pursuit of their goal of winning the debate and then the judge's task is to figure out how to make both winning and losing a positive experience for everyone. That's sometimes not easy, but it's almost impossible unless judges receive good training and also spend some serious time informing themselves on their various roles and functions and on the style(s) of debate they'll be judging.

When a debate program is looking for volunteers to become judges they need to stress how much support the judges will be given by students, teachers and parents and that everyone involved understands that their role is to give high quality positive feedback.



“There is always a multitude of reasons, both in favor of doing a thing and against doing it. The art of debate lies in presenting your reasons most effectively.”

Mark Rutherford

Concerns People Have About Being A Judge

There are a lot of great resources for people to learn how to judge every kind of debate, from a grade school classroom debate on kittens vs. puppies to a college tournament with serious prestige at stake. Our purpose in writing this guide isn't to re-invent the wheel – we'll link you to some of what we think are the best resources in each area. In this section we'll share some of what we've learned about what concerns people most when they are first approached to serve as a judge. This could be a parent of a student, a school supporter in the community, or a anyone who debate team organizers think would be a great judge. That could be anyone who stands out in some way - a reporter from a local station; a community youth leader; a retired attorney or bus nespersion; someone who wrote a 'Letter To The Editor' supporting education.

Concerns People Have About Being A Judge

Anyone who is approached to be a debate judge is probably going to have many of the same questions, so organizers and early supporters of a movement to get debate going in community schools need to be prepared to answer questions like these.

Concern #1: Why me?

I'm not qualified to be a debate judge!

The As you can see above, that's a very normal concern because the word 'judge' has a lot of baggage, but what a debate judge really does is bring their own experience in communicating with other people to the job of helping young people who are working hard to improve their own communications skills.

Sure there are some rules that debaters have to follow and judges have to enforce but not as many as most people think. Debating is a largely self-regulating activity where all the participants understand the rules and respect the need to follow them – that's part of what kids learn in debate better than almost anywhere else in their education. So – do you know well-organized, well-presented information and opinion when you see it, and do you feel able to stack several performances up against each other and say which was best and why? Can you follow a simple set of guidelines that will help you rank factors in each debater's performance in order to quantify your observations? Then you can be a judge and play a key role in helping young people achieve their highest potential just by spending a few hours a week or a month with some of the brightest, most motivated kids you'll ever meet.

"I love argument, I love debate. I don't expect anyone to just sit there and agree with me..."

Margaret Thatcher

Concern #2:

Will I have To Pick Winners & Losers?

Picking winners sounds like fun but nobody thinks picking losers is fun even when it's necessary – which it isn't in debate! Luckily in debate there are no losers. Here's how that works.

"Judges listen and evaluate, insofar as possible, from the perspective of ordinary intelligent person. Their assessments should strive to be holistic and comparative, considering all the contributions each participant or team made to the debate in aggregate and comparing these to other participants or teams. "

The winner is the person or team who did the best job. Their performance was given top ranking by the judge or judges. Then there is everyone else. Only one of them was the best but they each did their best and – most importantly - through your efforts as a judge in listening, considering and ranking each aspect of their performance, they will each have learned how they can do better next time. That makes everyone a winner, because judges know that self-improvement is the ultimate objective of all serious debaters and winning is literally just a way to measure steps in personal progress along that path.

Concern #3:

Will I have to judge students I know?

That depends entirely on the level of debate you're being asked to judge. In less formal, fun debates the role of the judge is to help maintain the intended structure and the flow of events, and the 'stakes' are low enough that nobody is going to worry about who knows who.

"Judges should remember that they are not aiming to evaluate who was cleverest, neatest or funniest, but who best used their cleverness, neatness and funniness to persuade us that the policy was a good or a bad idea. The best way to do that is for judges to simply address themselves towards debates as if there are real policies or controversies at stake and then see who best persuades them that the motion should or shouldn't be supported."

In more formal debates and in events like tournaments there is a lot of effort to ensure that judges are unrelated to anyone in the debate they are judging, but that only happens in an advanced judging situation so it shouldn't be a concern when you're recruiting for help to get a school program up and running, or even for help expanding the judges pool for an existing program. There's always room for people who want to be judges just like there's always room for kids who want to be debaters.

Concern #4:

I don't want to make a mistake and hurt someone's chances

That's a natural and very positive reaction, but the role of a debate judge isn't to assign fault, blame, guilt or any other negative kind of 'judgment'. It's important not to get hung up on the image most of us have of a judge, and of being judged. A debate judge evaluates and recognizes top performances and helps everyone who performs by offering clear evaluations of the strengths and weaknesses of each performance.

"Judges assess which teams were most persuasive with respect to the burdens their side of the debate is attempting to prove. Judges determine which team did the best to persuade them, by reasoned argument, that the motion ought to be adopted or rejected."

Concern #5:

How can I judge a bad performance without hurting feelings?

Unless you are 'judging' a primary school debate over the merits of kittens vs. puppies it's very likely that the debaters understand that there's 'nothing personal' in how the judge scores their performance. They also understand that, while judging some kinds of debate may involve quantifying and ranking performances, even numbers always involve subjective judgment.

"The outcome of the debate should obviously depend on what the teams do and don't say. Judges must not insert themselves into the debate. "

What debaters expect is simply a judge's best effort to make an unbiased evaluation of every performance. Whether that involves a ranking or scoring system or just a judge's notes for each round, the debaters learn from the feedback that being well-judged provides. If their presentation wasn't perfect, they want to know why so that they can work on that issue for their next challenge.

How Judges Rank The Quality Of Debaters' Arguments

A prospective judge might want to know more details on how the process of judging works; for example, how to determine the quality of arguments pro and con that they will hear during a debate.

The following scale used in international debate tournaments is quite detailed. It may be useful to note that performances that are basically very good still rank in the mid-range for scoring at the highest levels of competition. Obviously these standards must be relaxed a bit for less rigorous competitions but really, this "ladder" of criteria applies even when you're judging a primary school debate around the merits of school uniforms.

The bands on page 46 are rough and general descriptions; speeches needn't have every feature described to fit in a particular band. Many speakers will range across multiple bands depending on the feature assessed – for example, their style might appear of the 75-79 range, while their engagement might be closer to the 65-69 bracket, and their argumentation closest to the 70-74 range. Judges should not treat any individual feature as decisive in and of itself, but should rather aim to balance all features of the speech to come to the speaker score that seems most appropriate.

Throughout this scale, 'arguments' refers both to constructive material and responses.

95- 100 Plausibly one of the very best debating speeches ever given, flawless and astonishingly compelling in every regard. It is incredibly difficult to think up satisfactory responses to any of the arguments made.

90- 94 Brilliant arguments are extremely well-explained and analyzed in great depth, always central to the case being advocated, and demand highly sophisticated responses. The speech is very clear and incredibly compelling in its delivery. Role fulfilment is executed flawlessly and includes excellent engagement with other teams in the debate.

85- 89 Very good arguments are highly compelling and analyzed deeply; responses of real sophistication would be required to refute them. Delivery is clear and highly persuasive. Role fulfilment is close to flawless, and the speech engages directly and effectively with other teams in the debate.

80- 84 Consistently relevant arguments set-up or address key issues in the round with a good degree of explanation and analysis. The speech is clear throughout, and persuasively delivered. Role is well-fulfilled and engagement with other teams, whilst possibly lax on some points, is generally effective and convincing.

75- 79 Arguments are almost exclusively relevant, and frequently persuasive. Occasionally, but not often, the speaker may slip into: i) deficits in explanation; ii) simplistic argumentation vulnerable to competent responses; or iii) peripheral or irrelevant arguments. The speaker holds one's attention, provides clear structure, and successfully fulfils their basic role on the table. A genuine effort to engage effectively with other teams in the debate is made, though some important contributions may be missed or poorly unaddressed.

70- 74 Arguments are generally relevant, and some explanation of them given, but on multiple occasions there may be: i) obvious gaps in logic; ii) simplistic argumentation; or iii) peripheral or irrelevant material. The speaker mostly holds the audience's attention and is usually clear, but is not always compelling, and may sometimes be difficult to follow. There are decent attempts to fulfil one's role on the table and engage with other teams, but these may be undermined by problematic omissions.

65- 69 Relevant arguments are often made, but with limited explanation. The speaker is clear enough to be understood the vast majority of the time, but this may be difficult and/or unrewarding. Poor attempt to fulfil role, and whilst some engagement with other teams in the debate is made, it misses important contributions, and is often ineffective in refuting the arguments it does target.

60- 64 The speaker is often relevant, but rarely makes sustained arguments. Frequently but not always confusing, with the appeal of arguments weakly conveyed; minimal awareness of role, little if any engagement with other teams.

55- 59 The speech rarely makes relevant claims, which are only occasionally formulated as arguments. Confusing throughout, and perhaps somewhat limited in the basic quantity of what is said. No evident awareness of role, no meaningful engagement with other teams.

50- 54 Content is almost never relevant, is both confusing and confused, and is highly limited in quantity. No fulfilment of role is provided, nor any engagement with other teams.

Concern #6**How will I interact with the debaters?**

Judges are typically introduced at the beginning of the event and may even be part of the hosting of the event. However, once the debate has begun the judge and the timekeeper (if there is one) limit their interactions to procedural communications. Debaters appreciate judges who make eye contact but also understand that making notes is a key part of the judge's role. Judges should not offer any kind of encouraging or supportive gestures or expressions or show any other signs of possible approval or disapproval – strict neutrality doesn't mean keeping a stone face, but it doesn't mean giving a thumbs-up to a debater who has just scored a point either.

Concern #7:**What feedback will I be asked to give?**

A big part of judging is that you will be asked by many students to rank them and rate the quality of their work on a personal and informal level. In working with younger students, and even in less formal High School debates, there may be opportunities and even expectations that the judge(s) will share their helpful comments and reasons for decisions with the debaters. These are major learning opportunities and one of the great rewards of being a debate judge. Although at first it's a bit challenging to offer meaningful criticism instead of platitudes, debate judges quickly learn what most of the children already know – that the intended purpose of specific criticism of their performance is to help them improve and that if it is offered in a “we're all grown-ups here” but still caring way then that's how it will be received.

Most judges try to provide a balance of positive feedback and constructive observations. Students prefer constructive comments that help justify the ranking they have received. Saying “Great job” doesn't help the student understand how they could have done a ‘great job’ and still received a low ranking.

Concern #8:**How much time will I have to commit?**

In High School debating judges may be needed for everything from practice sessions to road trips, so it's important that prospective judges be given a clear understanding of how much preparation will be needed and how much time will be involved. If your debate program is still young then you'll want to recruit people who will be active supporters and will dedicate themselves to providing the program with the judging and feedback that the kids will need as everyone feels their way forward. There are a number of great videos on high school debate judging that will give anyone considering the role plenty of information on what they will be called on to do – we've provided links to some of the best in the resource section. You might consider holding a meeting with prospective judges to watch videos together as a way of getting started.

Concern #9:**How will I know what scores to give?**

There's a lot of good research on debate but almost nothing that allows a judge to actually measure any of the criteria you'll have to use to decide who has won the debate.

Judging a debate has been compared to judging a boxing match in concept. Each round in boxing is composed of swings and misses, hits and defenses, displays of various skills and other intangible factors like displays of courage, and at the end of each round the judges assign a systematic (but still impressionistic) “weight” to every factor for each boxer. At the end of a “decision” match – no knockout to end the fight early – the judges' scores are added up and the winner is declared. In concept the job of a debate judge is almost the same – you keep track of a set of factors in each round and assign a weight for each individual debater or team after each round, and then at the end you add the scores up and have a winner.

“Judges can and must assess how well-substantiated arguments are. This will inevitably involve some assessment of the quality of the supporting reasons offered for arguments; and seriously implausible claims may constitute weak support for an argument in the eyes of the judges. But judges must exercise the minimum of personal evaluation in making such claims, and even seriously implausible arguments cannot be disregarded by the judge if they haven’t been rebutted – though they may have little persuasive value. “

Sometimes you may actually witness a knockout during a debate but in debate the event doesn’t stop like it does when a fighter “goes down for the count”, but just like at a boxing match everybody at a debate knows a knockout when they see one and know when the debate is already over.

Concern #10: How do I evaluate the validity of an argument?

The analysis behind an argument consists of the reasons offered in support of it. Reasons can support arguments in a number of different ways, none of which is, in itself, “better” or “more important”.

Reasons offered in support of an argument might include:

- A logical explanation of why an argument is true.
- Presentation of empirical evidence for an argument.
- A convincing description of why a certain outcome will come about.
- Identifying widely shared moral intuitions in favor of an argument.
- Exposing a damaging logical implication of a contrasting argument.
- Identifying an emotive response that encourages us to care about a certain outcome.

Other Questions Prospective Judges Often Ask

These questions don’t fall into the category of ‘concerns’ like those just discussed but they are questions that prospective judges often ask sometime during the recruiting process.

What kind of background makes a good debate judge?

Being a debate judge is actually a natural and fun process in which you use your own experience with people and with yourself to help younger people learn to gain key skills that solid research shows beyond doubt will make a huge positive difference in their lives. It doesn’t take an expensive stadium or large budget – a debate team takes a few dedicated adult and a group of kids who instinctively understand that being better debaters will open doors for them in life that otherwise will be forever closed.

A professional debate judge writes “Anyone watching a performance can appreciate what the speaker has done, but in the same way a trained critic is better able to identify the components of a piece of art and provide constructive feedback on the components and process, a trained judge can help to advance leaning for the participants and audience by identifying the components of individual and team performances which made them better or worse than other performances. Ultimately, at the end of the day, what usually happens is the student who best connected with you, who made you understand or believe something (even if in an unexplainable way) is the one the judge will rank higher.”

What are my most important duties during the debate?

You should always time the speeches and write the time on the ballot. Coaches and competitors can get a good deal of information from how long the student's speech was in your round. If you indicate the student is rushing but the student's time is consistent with their other rounds or their practice sessions, they know that their practiced rate is too fast. But if their time in your round is a full minute shorter than practice, they know they did something anomalous in your round. Providing the time helps provide a context for the other comments."

What are some of the important things judges look for?

Here are some of the major decision areas that debate judges consider in evaluating different factors in declaring a winner, and more importantly in giving feedback either publicly or privately.

1. Overall Speaking Ability

Some examples: Did the speaker show appropriate use of English? Were they able to pronounce correctly and speak clearly and use grammatically correct sentences? Did they connect their major points with factual evidence and reasoning? Were their arguments solid and supported by references to authorities? Did they organize their thoughts effectively to address the major issues? Did they offer any special insights into the subject or topic? If appropriate or called for by the topic or material, did the speaker display humor, high energy, criticism or other forms of expression?

2. How well-prepared was the speaker?

Some examples: Was there clear and reasoned organization? Was delivery confident, reflecting a well-formed idea of the form of the argument being presented. Were all claims supported either by facts and evidence or examples and stories? Was the answer satisfactory, given the demand of the question, topic or point being debated? For example, in extemporaneous speaking, this might mean evaluating how well the speaker provided a nicely reasoned answer, while in impromptu speaking this could mean evaluating how well they presented a reasonable interpretation of the quotation they had been given.

Certain things do not matter in evaluating how good a speaker's analysis was:

- *The number of arguments the speaker makes,*
- *How clever/innovative the argument was,*
- *How interesting the argument was.*

What matters, once an argument is made, is how important its conclusion seems to be in the debate with respect to the burdens that each side is trying to prove, and the extent to which it seems to be analyzed and responded to (and how well it withstood or was defended against such responses).

Judges do not consider how important they thought a particular argument was, in the abstract, but rather how central it was to the overall contribution of any team or teams in this particular debate, and how strong the reasons speakers offered to support the claim that it was important/unimportant were

3. How Good Was The Delivery?

We expect debaters and speakers to have enough of an understanding of their subject matter to deliver their arguments and make their statements with a good delivery

Hesitations, pronunciation issues, memory glitches and other issues with student delivery happen all the time but these deficiencies must be judged by whether they reduced the effectiveness of the presentation much more than by any external standards.

For example, a debater might not use perfectly accented English but if that's also the situation with most of the school audience then a judge who does speak perfect English shouldn't apply their personal standards to judging student delivery.

A respected debate handbook notes:

“Some debaters have developed an excessively rapid style of delivery that interferes with the element of communication that is basic to debate. The ballot provides an avenue for indicating to the debater that speed of delivery interfered with communications.”

The real question is – everything considered, did they communicate effectively? A judge might legitimately note how a student could be even more effective in a certain way if they were able to work on an aspect of their accent (such as slowing down and speaking more distinctly), but should be clear that they did not suffer in their performance ranking because of accent issues.

“Above all else, a “strong accent” is not bad style. Everyone in the world has their own particular accent, and they all have their own accent strongly! When people talk about mild or strong accents, they mean how strong or mild the accent is compared to the accents with which they are familiar. This sort of subjective measuring is not a valid basis for judging certain styles as superior.”

“There is only one legitimate way “accent” can be a problem for a speaker, and that is if judges genuinely cannot understand what the speaker is saying despite their very best efforts to do so. This is a problem in the same way that speaking too fast to be understood is a problem – judges have to understand the words a speaker says in order to evaluate them. This is a problem that could afflict any accent in principle – it is not just a problem for an “ESL” or “EFL” accent.”

4. Did they keep within established time limits?

Especially with younger students, the fewer the rules the more active and energetic the participation in debate. That's why we reserve forms like 'Parliamentary Debate' for older students – not that there aren't plenty of budding political orators in grade schools! However, the one thing that every debate must have is a set of time limits and a means of enforcing them. Time limits are essential in creating the structured and inspired thinking that characterizes debate much the same way that time limits force chess novices and masters alike to think through their next moves and adjust their game to their opponent's moves quicker and more effectively than their opponent.

In keeping with the critical importance of time limits is the idea that all student debaters must learn quickly - that you can't exceed your allotted time regardless of how much you feel a need to keep talking. This means that you need to plan out what you're going to say so that you know before you begin speaking that you can get every important point in under your time limit – a valuable skill in a world where the most anyone has to catch another person's attention is generally measured in milliseconds.

General Guidelines For Judges

Here are a set of observations made by experienced debate judges that summarize the intent behind judging. These observations apply whether you are judging a primary school classroom debate or an intense high school or college tournament.

The expectation is that judges should:

- Avoid utilizing personal knowledge that they have of the topic, unless they concern knowledge that could reasonably be assumed to be held by someone of decent intellect and active news-media consumption (e.g.: “Syria is in the Middle East” or “Russia is a major oil producer” is clearly acceptable knowledge, but the details of Iraqi government troop movements is unlikely to be);
- Give little credit to appeals merely to emotion or authority, except where these have rational influence on an argument;
- Avoid presuming a geographic, cultural, national, ethnic or other background when assessing arguments;
- Avoid preferencing arguments or styles of speaking that match personal preferences;
- Assess the merits of a proposed policy, solution or problem separate from any personal perspectives in relation to it.

Thinking as the ordinary intelligent voter does not absolve us from our responsibilities to actually judge the debate – to evaluate the logical flow of arguments, determine the extent to which teams have seemed to win them, and ensure that they have done so within the rules.

The expectation is that judges should:

- Remember to **identify your biases** and to not let them influence your judgment.
- **Presume that the debaters are acting in good faith.** If a debater makes a factual error, do not presume he or she is attempting to lie. It is likely that he or she does not know the information is wrong.
- **Be patient – really.** Impatience communicates itself and has an impact on young people who are trying their best.
- **Give debaters the benefit of the doubt** about their choices. They may not make the arguments or choices that you would make, and that’s okay. Your task is to interpret how well they are communicating *their* ideas and the facts that support them.
- **Do not pre-interpret the topic.** When debaters get a topic for debate, it is *their* job to interpret the topic. *Their* interpretations are being debated.
- Be **open-minded and fair** to *both* teams.
- **Do not make comments that indicate** how you feel the debate is going during the debate. Your role as a judge is largely nonverbal until the debate is over.
- **Do not arbitrarily manufacture rules or ignore the rules** of the debate to suit your own preferences. You are free to make up whatever rules you want before the debate, but do not change the rules once the debate has begun. Watch your body language carefully.
- You’re responsible for time management. You must signal the beginning and end of protected times and the debaters will rely on you for these time signals.
- Learn to use a flowsheet. Flowsheets make it easier to track arguments made by students throughout the debate, making it easier to judge when its over.
- Leave your opinions out of it. The only facts known in the debate are what the teams bring forward. Do not bring your life-long held opinions into your judgement.

“Often as a judge, it can be tempting to complete arguments for teams that are interesting but pre-argumentative. Don’t.”

- Don't fill in for speakers. Do not "fill in" what you believe a speaker meant to say, was going to say, or should have said. Only base your judgment on what was actually said.
- Reveal your decision and the reasoning for it. Judges are required to reveal their decisions, their reasoning, and to give constructive feedback to the students when the debate is over.
- Your feedback should not stress winners and losers but should focus on the positive accomplishments of each participant. The feedback you provide is critical for students to be able to evaluate their performance, build on their strengths and address their shortcomings.

"It is not he who gains the exact point in dispute who scores most in controversy, but he who has shown the better temper." Samuel Butler

Although all judges follow the rules and conscientiously try to be fair, there are as many ways of judging as there are ways of debating. That said, there are two basic decisions all judges need to make: (1) deciding on a winner and (2) assigning individual points (or evaluations).

Deciding Who Wins

So, how do you decide who wins the debate?

Debates are about widely different issues and each form of debate is conducted somewhat differently, so there is no universal rule for deciding who wins or exactly how to arrive at that decision. Ideally, you will decide the debate based on obvious differences in the performances of the debaters over the course of the debate. The process gets tricky when there are clearly two (or more) individuals or teams that are superior to the others, rather than there being just one who stands out at obviously superior.

"Don't invent arguments for the debaters, don't complete their arguments for them and don't rebut their arguments. Judges often speak about a debater "getting at a good point" even if "they didn't quite get there". This is just an excuse for a judge to invent an argument they'd like to hear. Don't do it. As we don't do teams' rebuttal for them, we don't consider claims invalid just because we disagree, or because we can see holes in their arguments, nor do we ignore arguments that were made just because they were ignored by other teams in the debate. "

During the debate, the teams or individuals will present different kinds of arguments. The proposition will make a case for the motion being debated and the opposition team will make arguments for why the proposition's case is misguided, dangerous, or inadequate. You will have to make a judgement based on the merits to decide whether oppositions arguments or the proposition's rejoinders were more convincing.

"In an ideal world, teams will engage in extensive responses to each other's well-detailed points. In most of the debates that occur in the actual world, teams will often talk past each other and leave each other's points unchallenged. Under those circumstances, the judge will have to assess not only which arguments are most important, but equally which are most clearly proven."

During the debate, debaters may set out criteria for your decision. Encourage your student to offer these criteria. They are even permitted to address you directly, saying that you should or should not base your decision on a particular argument or kind of argument. Although you are basing your decision on which team or individual was most effective at arguing a position, do not decide t

For example, probability and risk calculation can play a role in the significance of an argument. However, it is not your job to interject your own risk calculations or value judgments into the debate. The debaters have weighed the options for you – it is their job to address why their arguments outweigh or are more important than or more instrumental to the decision than those of the other team.

“Unrebutted points that require the judge to make some logical leaps are often more persuasive than thoroughly-rebutted points and are always more persuasive than no points at all but are not preferable to a well-reasoned argument which rests on fewer unsubstantiated assumptions. What is and is not rebutted is therefore of vital importance to judging debates. “

Individual Evaluations

Whether you intend to do it formally on a scoring sheet or as informal comments, it is important to provide students individualized feedback after a debate. If you are not grading students strictly on a debate, this feedback may come in the form of some notes written on a grading sheet explaining a few things the student did well and a few things that he or she should work on for next time.

If you plan to grade student on their performance, or simply want to use a more detailed scoring system, here's an example of a commonly-used grading format for in-class debate. However, please feel free to create your own version that reflects your teaching goals for your class.

Suggested Debate Scoring Rubric – Rank Presenters Within Each Range

Score	Argumentation	Refutation	Structure	Presentation
91-100	Sophisticated understanding or issues and strategies. Presents powerful arguments with substantial evidence to support sound reasoning. Able to think on their feet.	Understands how their arguments interrelate. Recognized and investigated inconsistencies in the opponent's claims.	Showed strong narrative structure. Persuasive introduction and conclusion. Speech was sophisticated and easy to follow. Seamlessly integrated arguments.	Effectively used rhetorical devices (humor, inflection, pausing) to add depth to the argument. Thoroughly engaged and highly effective. Strong eye contact.
81-90	Able to establish clear positions that demand a sophisticated reply. Adheres to ARE format and effectively presents evidence to support issues. Is well prepared to discuss issues.	Maintains his own/ team's positions, supplementing them with thoughtful analysis and examples. Effectively refuted major arguments made by opposing team.	Simple, effective narrative structure for own arguments; some difficulty integrating multiple counter-positions. Uses speaking time effectively. Sufficiently organized so that listeners not taking notes could follow.	Speaks in a clear and engaging manner. Only occasional use of entertaining or persuasive style. Confident and credible. Occasional verbal pauses (um). Strong eye contact.
71-80	Speaker clearly understands argumentation but only occasionally uses ARE format. Speaker confuses reasoning and evidence, often offering only one or the other. Struggled to identify debate's major issues.	Speaker discusses own arguments without answering opposing arguments, though there was some refutation addressing a combination of both general and specific issues.	Speaker has a basic structure (intro, body, conclusion) but strays from it. Speaker can organize own points but loses structure when addressing opponent's points. Could allocate time more effectively.	Speaks clearly but is not overly engaging or persuasive. Some distracting verbal interruptions (ums, pauses). Good but not outstanding nonverbal communication.

60-70	Did not follow the ARE format, with some exceptions. Used little evidence to support arguments. Has inconsistencies, logic gaps, or fallacies in major arguments. Little integration of issues from teammates.	Does not respond or reply to major arguments from the opposing side. Repeats previously stated ideas/positions rather than develop, analyze, or compare them. Speaker does not use well-developed refutation techniques.	Full speech is not well organized. Lacks an attention-getting introduction and a powerful conclusion. Difficult to follow for a significant period. Unclear when moving from one point to the next. Ineffective allocation of time.	Loses clarity for sustained periods. Poor eye contact and infrequent use of gestures. Speaker does not sound confident or convincing and is not engaging. Does not present effectively with teammates.
Below 60	Scores below 60 are reserved for students who are unsuccessful as debaters as well as otherwise uncooperative, mean-spirited, or disruptive during the debate.			



Let's Compare Debate Judging and Student Paper Grading Rubrics

We believe that helping students increase their debating skills can, among many other beneficial outcomes, actually reduce the workload on dedicated teachers. Think about this – what if the average teacher could reduce the average time they spend grading student papers by just one minute per paper simply because the students are writing better papers as a result of the skills and discipline they've learned from debate?

We think this is more than just possible, and perhaps the best evidence we can offer is this “Grading Rubric” for High School teachers. Compare this table of criteria with the debate “Judging Rubric” above. Notice anything interesting? As students progress from, let's say, the 71-80 range to the 81-90 range in debate, what do you think would be the impact on a student who start

Student Paper Grading Rubric

	Learning Target	1 Needs Improvement	2 Emerging Competence	3 Competent	4 Outstanding
	Data Analysis: The candidates provide a graphic display of the data which includes graphs, tables and or matrices.	Lacking graphic demonstration of the research data.	Communication of the research study through graphic demonstration was not directly related to the research question(s). Graphic display (i.e, graphs, tables, matrices) does not communicate meaningful research findings.	Display meaningful communication of the research study through graphic demonstration was not directly related to the research question(s); communicated through at least one quality display (i.e, graphs, tables, matrices)	Display meaningful communication of the research study through graphic demonstration was not directly related to the research question(s). The presentation includes multiple quality displays (i.e, graphs, tables, matrices) of several types of data.
	Discussion of Data: The candidates discuss the research objectives, reflect on the study, interpret the results, and direct the study toward future implications.	Vague discussion of the research objectives as related to the research question; reflection on the study reveals few, if any, connections to the research question/s, faulty interpretation of the results, AND a lack of synthesis of results to direct future implications.	Vague discussion of the research objectives as related to the research question; reflection on the study reveals few connections to the research question/s, faulty interpretation of the results, OR a lack of synthesis of results to direct future implications.	Discussion of the research objectives as related to the research question; reflection on the study and its relevance to the research question/s, simple interpretation of the results, and synthesis of results that directs future implications.	Detailed evaluation of the research objectives as related to the research question; insightful reflection on the study and its relevance to the research question/s, AND the current literature, reasoned interpretation of the results, and synthesis of results that directs future implications.
	Conclusions: The candidates synthesize the research findings into a cohesive conclusion that addresses new questions, future implications, next steps AND make connections between the content and other parts of the discipline.	Conclusion is lacking a synthesis of the findings, discussion of new questions, future implications and next steps.	Weak synthesis of the findings into a cohesive conclusion that addresses new questions, future implications, and next steps. (minimum of three pages)	Strong synthesis of the findings into a cohesive conclusion that addresses new questions, future implications, and next steps. (minimum of three pages)	Strong synthesis of the findings into a cohesive conclusion that addresses new questions, future implications, and next steps AND shows connections between content and current literature. (minimum of three pages)
	APA Format: The candidates write a well-organized professional paper using correct APA format.	Paper lacks clear organization AND contains errors in APA style formatting.	Paper lacks clear organization OR contains errors in APA style formatting.	Well-organized paper, using correct APA for references and citations but not for formatting and/or content.	Well-organized professional paper, using correct APA formatting and style for content, citations and references.

The Importance of Flow Sheets

It is important for judges, just like debate participants and their coaches, to keep track of the arguments made during a debate on a flow sheet. Keeping track of the unfolding elements of a debate through systematic note taking is known as "Flowing". Here is an excellent 7-minute introduction to the basic principles of Flowing. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YY-JxA0MvOU>

It is easy for an audience and even a judge to make the mistake of deciding the debate largely based on the final rebuttal speech. That's one reason for keeping a detailed flow sheet – it allows everyone to keep track of events using the same format even though individual interpretations and focal points will vary.

In a formal debate, the proposition rebuttal speech needs to be both a response to the opposition's arguments and a summation of the proposition's final position. When deciding the debate, a judge will need to evaluate whether the proposition failed to address and respond to any of the oppositions arguments and then decide how to weigh those 'conceded-by-default' arguments. Participants may also change or drop arguments over the course of the debate. A good flow sheet helps everybody involved in the debate from any perspective – judge, participant, or coach- to track the arguments as they progress.

This is a sample flow sheet from a "Lincoln-Douglas" debate format. As you can see it's quite formal but still logical and easy to follow. It reflects exactly how the give-and-take of the debate flows between participants.

Affirmative Constructive	Negative Constructive	1st Affirmative Rebuttal	Negative Rebuttal	2nd Affirmative Rebuttal
Your notes about the Affirmative Constructive go here.	The negative's attacks on the affirmative case are written here.	Jot down notes about the affirmative's rebuttal to the negative's attacks here.	Negative's response to the affirmative's rebuttal goes here.	Since the Affirmative only has three minutes for this speech, what usually happens is that instead of covering every argument on the flow, the affirmative simply selects a number of points to re-iterate, Jot them down here.
You can use this space to record possible questions to ask during the cross-examination.	This space contains notes about the negative case.	The affirmative's attacks on the negative's case go here.	The negative's responses to the affirmative's attacks go here. Also, any final points of summary can be recorded here as well.	



THE FOUNDATION: SUPPORT AND SUSTAINABILITY.

The Fun Part

For high school debating you need to raise more money than for debating in the lower grades because you're going to debate other schools and probably go on the road. Even so, we recommend having as much in-school debating as possible. Obviously, we believe in debating in class as a form of teaching, as well as a formal debating class. The best schools believe in the principle of never saying no to anybody who wants to join in. If it's 50 people, it's 50 people. They're going to learn by coming to the debating classes, wherever you have to have them, but you're only going to have 4 to 8 people ever do hard debating. It doesn't mean you can't move it around to do more of it, but those 4-8 people, or the rest of the people are going to aspire to be there. Don't ever say no to somebody on a debating team.

Harvard never says no to anybody who wants to join the debating team. They had a sophomore that joined them a few years ago that never debated in her life and now has been a national champion twice with no prior debating skills. Debating skills don't require straight As or Bs. In fact, our goal is to take a C student and bring them up if we can, because the A student is already going to perform well in whatever she does, but we want them on the team too. We want them to help teach the other kids and that's the one thing you need to teach--team playing, but you need a foundation to support this effort. The foundation should have people involved in the school, people outside the school, parents of the debating people, any other parents who supports debating and alumni from the school. Go after any alumni and/or parents that were on debating teams that are still living in the area. Have

them help because they know how much this means and the stronger better foundation of people you put together the better. It could be as few as five people, but we recommend 10-12, but don't get it too big because it gets too hard to manage. Don't have tons of meetings, but within that foundation you have the teachers, a coach, that's probably a teacher designated a coach and then an assistant coach. That assistant coach is in training at all times to take over the coaching job if the teacher gets transferred, gets moved or decides she wants to move on to something else. Don't ever let this be about people only. Make it be about having positions covered with backup and the backup should also be the judges. You should have a couple of judges that are ready to go, and they are volunteer positions. In 10 hours, you can go to other debates and take tests and learn how to judge. It's quite an honor to be a judge, even though you sometimes take a little heat after the vote. That's part of the fun.

For raising money for high schools, there's lots of options. If you have a community fair, make sure you have a booth at the fair to ask for money and maybe come up with something really fun to do there. The whole team should fan out and visit targeted local businesses and professional offices like law and medical offices and ask each of them to pledge \$50.00 to \$100.00 a year. Don't ask for a lot, unless you have somebody that really is into debating like an attorney who was a famous college debater. Be sure to do your background research, sometimes called 'due diligence' before you visit someone to ask for their support. Know in advance why they will want to support you once they hear your story.



"When I am getting ready to reason with a man, I spend one-third of my time thinking about myself and what I am going to say; and two-thirds of my time thinking about him and what he is going to say."
Abraham Lincoln

FUNDRAISING & SPONSORSHIPS

What do you need money for?

In our experience an annual budget for high school will probably be from \$3000.00 to \$5000.00. It sounds like a lot, but you'll probably travel to six debates with a couple of them being overnight. You may go to a statewide debate and if you're really good, you could go to a national debate. Usually you have to raise extra money to go to a national debate, but you can do that when you know your team has been selected to compete. Tell people that if you give us the money, we're going to make a sign that'll be up on the wall behind the debating teams. Your name will be up there. It can be custom made; it can be handmade. I can make a real case for it to be handmade and more personal, but it could be done with the art department of the school. Involve them, the AV guys, and photography, etc.

All your debates need to be photographed, or better yet videotaped. It can be on an iPhone, that's fine. It doesn't have to be perfect, but it has to be good enough to be able to download and put on the internet. But more importantly, you should be able to send it to all your friends. Send it to the family. Send it to whoever you want to send it to, because that's what's great about today's internet world. Get them excited, then you might say hey listen Uncle John, give me \$10.00 for being in the debate, but if I win this debate, I want \$20.00 or \$30.00. Make them pay you more for winning. Don't be surprised how much money that can raise.

It's not unheard of for debate teams having 10 sponsors. That's \$100.00 just for being in the debate and \$1000.00 if they win the debate. It all goes to the debating team. This is about a team. The money goes to the team. The more we support the team the better you'll feel about yourself and helping your fellow students and the more prestige you'll have. You may even have a debating team that has pins that they wear

that say debating team on them. You could have a team t-shirt. It depends on how formal or informal you want to be. The only thing we're sure of, do it your own way.

Get sponsors from the local area. Ask different restaurants if they would take 5% of their revenue from one night and you'll bring in a whole bunch of flyers that night about your debating team and what you're doing and trying to do. Always be asking for volunteers and come up with flyers. We can give you ideas about that as well, if you want to send us an email and ask what would a flyer look like? Other ways for parents to be involved could be driving to debates. All of those parents that are really involved should be on a foundation list. Then an email blast could go out every couple of weeks, sharing what's going on with the debating team, here's our schedule and what's coming on. Just like a softball league or other activities.

Don't be afraid to debate some touchy subjects, you could have a sponsor that says, hey if you debate this, I'll give you this. In college it's done all the time. You don't care what you debate, as long as it's tasteful, not disrespectful subject matter, but if it's a good subject matter and if somebody wants to see it debated and they'll give you \$1000.00, why wouldn't you do that? You could make that an in-school debate, rather than an inner school debate if you don't feel that it would work well. The inner school debates are usually picked by the group ahead of time, but you could do it as a in school debate. So, if you do a debate and somebody is going to give you \$1000.00 to debate, have four people on each side and the big sponsor at the top.

It's all about positive attitude. We want to get rid of the negativity that has been embracing, not just our education system in a few cases, but in general and it starts with the media and the politicians, both sides of the aisle. It's a Republican issue, it's a Democrat issue. Let's teach our kids some positive things so that they can be honest and fair. That's kind of the foundations job to be the keepers of the gate, to make sure that this goes forward, that you have coaches and backup coaches, that you have judges and backup judges and that you help the head organizer put together the pieces.

Most schools already have much of what a debate team needs to get up and running. You don't really need to worry about equipment. Most schools have the AV equipment for microphones and speaking and they even have the video equipment. If they don't, just use an iPhone, but please make sure you record each debate and send it out to anybody and everybody you can think of. Some people will have enough pull to get it on a TV show, the local station on a Sunday morning maybe. You do a couple of those, you'll be amazed. You always ask for donations when you do that. The TV station may or may not pay you, but they will help you raise some money. They all have down time. It could be your PBS station, your local community stations. How many kids would love to see themselves on TV? I mean it's extremely effective in making them better students, and more importantly better persons. That's high school. You can also have an auction. Just a crazy auction for the debating team. Have everybody donate everything they want, take everything to the auction and put a price on it. What's left over, donate to Goodwill. That's also a very good way to raise a lot of money. You know, if you had \$6000 or \$7000 budget for a high school that would be huge.

You could buy some nice trophies and you take pictures of the trophies and put it in the school paper. You say go to this website to see the debate. All of those things will help

build a really strong community around the debating team and give it the respect that it deserves.

If you do a search for school fundraising ideas you'll get dozens of websites that want you to buy their candy or cookies or other junk to raise money with. Good luck – some of them may be legitimate but many we see look slightly suspicious.

However, for an easy, almost automatic year-round fundraiser consider getting every parent and supporter of your debate team signed up for Amazon Smile with your school as the designated organization. The Amazon Smile program will donate 0.5 percent of all eligible items every "Smile" member buys to the charitable organization of their choice – all you have to do is make sure they designate your school debate team under the school's auspices!

Your team members have parents and grandparents who probably shop on Amazon every week, and I'll bet less than 10% of them have taken the time to sign up with Amazon Smile and designate a recipient. Also - your school already has business supporters in the community whose businesses buy large amounts on Amazon all the time – and it won't cost them one penny to designate your School's Debate Team to receive 0.5% of what they spend on Amazon.

For example, law firms buy office supplies on Amazon every month and every law firm in your town will want to be supporting your debate if you just ask. So simply make sure your school is set up at <http://smile.amazon.com/> to be an available option, and then go talk with every lawyer in town. Be sure to continually promote this option to parents in newsletters, email and at school events as well as to businesses and professionals. You might even publish the names of everyone in the community who is supporting you with Amazon Smile. This is an especially good fundraising approach for smaller towns where the merchants and professionals

are continually being asked to donate money so if nobody has approached them with this option, which costs them ZERO dollars, they should jump at the chance.

Plus in smaller communities local businesses are much more likely to be buying supplies on Amazon than in larger cities. However even in big cities businesses and professionals in the school's neighborhood are probably all Amazon buyers and should be approached with the "Smile" option.

If you would like to learn more about registering your school and debate team to receive AmazonSmile donations, go to org.amazon.com. For more information about the AmazonSmile program itself, go to <http://smile.amazon.com/about>

Make sure while raising money for debates you are also offering opportunities for involvement and showing people that it is prestigious to be a Debate Team Foundation supporter. Make it a source of pride to say "I'm on the debate foundation for my high school". Foundation members can participate in educating and learning as well as being judges. Judging is not difficult--ten hours total invested time to become qualified. You just need to go to a couple of other debates, sit next to a debating judge and learn from them. They will be happy to help you. Don't try to make it formal or complicated because it doesn't need to be. Not at this stage for sure. Make it fun though.

The most obvious people potential supporters are the parents of the students who were on a debating team sometime in their schooling. What about your school's alumni? You go through your alumni archives and see people who have not moved away and may still be available and interested. Call several of them up and say "hey, can you help us organize this?" I've seen a lot accomplished by one or two motivated and determined volunteers. Another way to raise money You could do a deal where family members say, if you're going to be in the debate, I'll donate \$5.00

for you being in the debate. If you win the debate, I'll donate \$10.00. That money goes to their debating team and they get credit for that. It's not money for them. If they the students are really hustlers, kids may have 10 people supporting them. Ten people at \$5.00 is \$50.00. If they win their debate, they get \$100.00. How many of those would it take to support a whole debating team? Not very many.

Don't be afraid to go to some local businesses too. Go to the tire store, the apparel store or businesses where parents frequent and ask if they could donate \$50.00 for this debate or that debate, or for \$200.00 they can pick the subject matter for the debate. (Provided it is a tasteful subject. It's not as important what they debate as long as there debating. We'll put their name on a banner. It doesn't have to be a fancy banner. It can be all hand done if you want. In fact, many people think that simple and hand-made is kind of fun. You could go to a local restaurant and ask them if they'd contribute 5% of their revenue for one night for the debating team and promise them that your entire team will promote the event on social media. Then get on your phones and internet and tell everyone you know to go to this certain restaurant or pizza parlor, or hamburger place this night because 5% of the revenue goes to the school.

Other ways you can raise money is like the local football team sponsor would probably be glad to give you \$50.00 if he was the main sponsor for maybe a six session program of in-school debates where you bring everybody in the auditorium. Then maybe you raise enough money to go to other schools, depending on if there is a league for your town for high schools to do debating in, or you start one. You could even start a small league in your town and show other schools in neighboring communities what to do. Trust me, the more schools that do this the better it will be for your school. Especially if you are one of the schools that starts it for the community.

Make sure that you video all your debates with an iPhone or whatever you can get your hands on. The better the equipment the better the video, but kids today can do amazing things with just their phones. Make sure that it is fully recorded and get a team of students together whose job is to edit and post these videos. YouTube makes it easy to post every debate so anybody in the community can look at it. You might even get the local TV station to put it on in a Sunday morning, especially if you have a community TV station, and then get the word out via phone calls and social media. Get everybody to watch - once people start seeing this stuff outside the school you will be pleasantly surprised at the people who will come and want to be involved.

Your biggest challenge will be if you want to have the right team, to help the students - but it's really important that you have a teacher that helps this get started. A coach is more than likely going to be a teacher or - surprise - a coach. Athletics and Debate have so much in common in terms of what they offer to kids that every school's coaches should be 100% behind a debate program and should get their athletes involved from the beginning. If the program develops where you're doing multi-school things, the teacher/coach should be compensated extra for the time that they're going to have to take for this. A lot of their time can be done during school because they're helping the school. I think it will work differently in every school and town.

We do not believe in asking for any money from the school system to support debating, because then they want to take control and make it a bureaucracy. There will be enough bureaucracy with the foundation already - it seems to be inevitable in any organization. The debate program should NOT be controlled by administrators at the school; the teachers, parents and even the students should control it. Nobody on top of the teachers and parents. The less politics involved in any debate team program the better; it will be run better and more fairly the less say administrators have in how it's run.

It is imperative that you always have a coach and a coach-in-training. You always have to have judges and judges-in-training. That's only four people. Two that are judges and two that are learning to be judges. I strongly recommend that you do this. This will guarantee sustainability. It will also provide a backup for last-minute problems where a judge can't make it.

We believe strongly that there should be trophies for every debate. You can have little trophies for the in-school or in-class debates - the size of the award matters less than how significant it appears. In-class debate winners could have a plaque on the wall - there should be lots of plaques and lots of winners but not everybody should get a trophy. Everybody can get a certificate saying they participated in the debate. We think that's fine, but trophies should be trophies. Winning should be winning. Losing should be learning that you can't win every time, and sometimes there will be those who have a superior argument, or game, or later in life, a winning business proposal.

Losing is a part of learning, and learning why you lost makes people try harder the next time.

The one thing we want to really emphasize about this book - this is an outline, and a guide, not the last word. While most of these ideas have been tried and tested, but don't be afraid to go off and add your own ideas. Do something unique and different, as long as you do something positive.

If you increase dialog in a respectful way and you get students to back up what they're saying with facts, rather than just saying you know black is blue. Okay, prove to me how black is blue. Give me some facts. Well there are some facts that show you how blue is in black. Make sure that the foundation is a group of people that includes everybody in the school that's working on the debating program or who has any reason to care about its success.

You can have some kids come and say how kids write memos of thanks to the foundation that says how they love what they're doing and how it helps them and thank them for what they're doing. Always send a thank you. At the end of the year, all debaters should write a letter to the foundation and to the individual members. It is important for people to get those kinds of accolades. What do they want to do? They want to give you more and they want to come back.

Take this as a guide and do it what fits your way. We're only trying to encourage you to do debating and talking with each other one on one with facts and with respect. That's really what we think would be the biggest advantage for the student and the teacher because of the research work they'll have to do. It'll increase their reading and speaking skills. One thing about debating, people are afraid to speak. They aren't afraid to speak in debating, especially when they really get excited about the subject matter. You pull them into speaking with debating. We think a little differently than some people, you've got to be a great speaker to be a good debater. You can become a great speaker from debating.



How to Write Great Topics - And Why It Matters!

(Adapted from: "On Topic Writing" by John Meany. Claremont McKenna College)

The importance of writing or choosing well-crafted debate topics cannot be over-emphasized. They establish and define the issues that will be in contention. They motivate students to explore and try to understand unfamiliar parts of their world. They introduce students to new ideas and new ways of looking at familiar concepts. They frame the parameters of the research that goes into debate preparation and so determine the quality of evidence and arguments. A great debate topic sparks intellectual creativity and innovation and creates excitement in the room. And, as students quickly realize from their experiences in challenging debates, the particular words selected for a debate topic can expand or limit the arguments that are available for the proposition or opposition teams.

Everyone involved in debating recognizes the importance of appropriately worded topics. Badly worded topics will almost always result in poor-quality debates. Because the topic is interpreted as a statement of proof - the claim that the proposition team will attempt to show is more likely to be true than false - an entire debate may collapse due to confusing, vague, or awkward wording. Given all these factors, most people would agree that it is a good idea to avoid badly worded topics. So then - what does it take to create a great debate topic?

First, everyone involved should zero in on the purpose of a topic statement. It ought to be designed to promote serious discussion and constructive argumentative clashes. It should provoke important and challenging questions. It ought to be a subject that is controversial or open to multiple interpretations, and it should encourage an

examination of both obvious and subtle differences. In the simplest terms, a great topic will produce a great debate!

A topic should also define an issue from which debaters and the audience can draw conclusions. Debates not only create an opportunity to open an issue for discussion but when successful they also produce a definitive result, a conclusion that a particular opinion on an issue may be better than other opinions on the matter. A good debate topic allows students to identify and determine the best arguments for their side of the topic. Topics have to be interesting, challenging, and controversial - they serve to focus the discussion and inspire debaters to new heights.

The best topics are in the form of a simple declarative sentence, and they help students create powerful arguments explaining the world they know or are in the process of discovering.

Topics can be about the issues faced by students every day, e.g., "Schools should have a dress code", "Cell phones should not be permitted at school", or "Peer pressure does more good than harm." Good debate topics can teach students to advance sophisticated arguments about the subjects they may have only touched on in class: "The United States should significantly increase space exploration," "Medical schools should ban animal dissection", or "The United States should pay reparations for slavery."

In addition, well-written topics provide opportunities for new learning, a chance for students to develop

research skills and understand the complex world they are beginning to explore: “The United States is winning the war on terror,” or, “NAFTA should be extended throughout the Americas.”

A topic author must consider many issues. Is there enough good quality research material available that supports a debate on the topic statement? Is the information presented in a way that will engage students? Is it accessible? Is it interesting or boring? Does the research avoid technical or difficult language so that students from different backgrounds can use it? Does it grab the debaters’ imaginations and help them engage the judges and the audience?

Here are some of the most common issues with debate topics along with suggestions for avoiding them:

Showing off

A motion for debate ought to be written strictly for the purpose of introducing a debate. Motions should not be written to make the writer appear particularly witty or clever. Please avoid wording with concealed agendas or points of view like: “The public education system should start doing its own homework” or “The United States should unplug the electric chair.” These topics can be phrased more directly to address issues of public education and capital punishment without implying a particular perspective, such as, “The “No Child Left Behind Act” does more good than harm.” or “Our state should abolish the death penalty.”

Requiring multiple proofs.

It is difficult enough to make one solid proof in a debate. It is unfair to require that the proposition team prove several issues simultaneously. Examples of poorly worded topics of this kind include

“Standardized testing is fair and necessary,” or “Columbus Day is the worst national holiday.” The first topic makes the proposition team prove that standardized testing is both fair and needed. The proposition team arguing the second motion would have to compare Columbus Day to each of a half dozen other national holidays. This is too much totally unnecessary work to have to accomplish in a single debate.

Extremist language

“Always,” “all,” “never,” and other unconditional words or expressions place too high a burden of proof on the proposition team. Not only must the team establish its proof, but there can be no exceptions - even an extraordinarily rare case. Examples include “The Federal Government’s power comes at the expense of all the states” or “The time for any negotiations for peace in the Middle East has passed.” These topics do raise important issues, but better wording might be “The Federal Government should not surrender its authority to states” or “The United Nations should establish negotiations for Middle East peace.” Can you see why the alternative wording avoids an unreasonably high burden of proof?

False dichotomies

In a false dichotomy, debaters are presented with two “binary” choices, when in fact there are more than two choices. For example, “If today is not Tuesday, it must be Wednesday.” The fact that it is not Tuesday does not mean that it is in fact Wednesday, but because of the wording the speaker would be forced to make an argument to show that it is Wednesday. Other examples of false dichotomies include: “Public schools should give up freedom for safety” or “An oppressive government is better than no government.” These are not bad areas for debate but the topic wording could certainly be improved. It

is, once again, possible to transform these topics into meaningful non-binary statements: “Public schools should increase student surveillance” or “In this case, the United States should reduce free speech rights.”

Awkward or confusing expressions

Here are several examples of confusing topics recently used in intercollegiate debate competition. When announced, they were greeted with calls of “Shame!” “This House believes that we cannot let terrorists and rogue nations hold this nation and our allies hostage.” “This House would rock mob style.” “Title IX is a bridge too far.” “Nero’s encore demands a response.” Huh???

In tournament situations, writers will need to create sets of topics rather than just a single well-written topic. When considering a set of 4 or 5 topics for a tournament it is important that topics are balanced and diverse and that they relate to one another. In particular, writers should evaluate the topics they have created to ensure that students debate some familiar issues but also more challenging and lesser-known topics.

Of course, it is important that sets of topics have little or no argument overlap. Even when topic language changes the arguments that follow may not. For example, it is possible that the different motions, “The United States is winning the war on terror,” and “Saudi Arabia is more an enemy than an ally of the United States” may produce many proposition and opposition arguments in common, as both topics would focus on terrorism and Middle East policy.

Like most serious educational tasks, topic writing is usually best when it involves the efforts of several people. Even if you are the only person tasked with creating a topic or topic set, it is a good idea to have trusted colleagues review those topics before a final topic announcement. Preparation takes time – it rarely happens in a single inspired moment. Patience is a virtue (but the statement, “Patience is a virtue,” should never be a topic. – think about why that’s the case.) The more care that is devoted to topic writing, the more opportunities debaters will have to examine and debate the substantive details of important issues, and the more satisfying the debate will be. (Adapted from: “On Topic Writing” by John Meany. Claremont McKenna College)

Debate Preparation Graphic Organizer

Opening Statement (2 minutes)

<p>Your Name and Position on the issue: My name is _____ and I believe that _____ because _____</p> <p>Outline Your Three Basic Points:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First, in my experience with _____ we have noticed a significant _____ as a result of _____. 2. Second, in the research that we have done, _____ we have concluded that _____ because of _____. 3. Third, based on _____ it's clear that _____ due to a notable _____. <p>Close your opening statement with a stunning fact or passage: As you will see from our presentation, _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Word Bank</p> <p>Statement: Claim Believe Reason</p> <p>Listing: First, Second, Third</p> <p>To Show Importance: Significantly Notably Importantly</p> <p>Citing Evidence: In my experience... From my research... Based on...</p>
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State Your Arguments in Detail, Citing Passages (2 minutes)

<p>Argument #1: As we mentioned earlier, our experiences have shown that _____ _____ is clearly the most impactful support for EL students.</p>			<p>Explaining: In other words To put it another way That is to say To that end</p> <p>Giving examples: For instance As an example To give an illustration</p> <p>Additional Information: Moreover Furthermore What's more Likewise Similarly Another key thing to remember As well as Not only... but also Coupled with</p>
<p>Evidence A (Passage from experience, article, internet source, etc.): We know this because</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Evidence B (Passage from experience, article, internet source, etc.): Moreover</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Evidence C (Passage from experience, article, internet source, etc.): Similarly</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>	
<p>Argument #2: Another key thing to remember about the impact of this strategy that we have gleaned from our research is: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>			

Evidence A (Passage from experience, article, internet source, etc.): We know this because 	Evidence B (Passage from experience, article, internet source, etc.): Likewise, 	Evidence C (Passage from experience, article, internet source, etc.): Not to mention 	Firstly, secondly, thirdly... Not to mention
<p>Argument #3: Finally, it is clear that _____ has the greatest impact on EL students' learning because _____</p>			
Evidence A (Passage from experience, article, internet source, etc.): As shown by 	Evidence B (Passage from experience, article, internet source, etc.): With additional support from 	Evidence C (Passage from experience, article, internet source, etc.): Furthermore 	

Rebuttal (1 minute)

Opponents Argument: We acknowledge that _____ Counterpoint: Despite this _____ Opponent's Argument: Additionally, our colleagues have claimed _____ Counterpoint: Nevertheless _____ 	Contrast Words: However On the other hand Having said that By contrast Then again Acknowledging reservations: Despite this With this in mind Provided that In light of Nonetheless Nevertheless Notwithstanding
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Closing Statement (1 minute)

<p>Summarize Your Debate Points: In conclusion, we believe that</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <p>Call to Action: Based on this compelling argument, it is our hope that you will join us and build _____ into experiences for English Learners in your classroom. They deserve that support and there's no time to waste.</p>	<p>Summarizing: In conclusion Above all Persuasive Compelling All things considered</p> <p>Verbs or action words: Start Stop Build (grow) Join Learn Discover</p>
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A Message for Parents of High School Debaters

You can help your teen succeed at debate simply by encouraging them to read and learn more about the world and about current events. You can also help them learn to discuss and debate issues by encouraging conversation on current events as part of family life. Remember that your child will not be able to pick which side of the topic they will represent in any given debate. This means that they will need practice arguing persuasively for both sides of many different issues. Do make an effort to understand what is expected of them by their teacher/coach so your help is complementary to the teaching/training they are receiving.

If you are interested in helping out with tournaments (good for you!), speak with your child's teacher/coach first to make sure any help you provide doesn't interfere with plans the teacher/coach already has, and to see what kind of help is most needed. Work closely with the teacher/coach to make sure all students, not just your own child, are getting all the help they need to succeed. Remember that your child is not debating on their own – they are on a team where all students must work together.

Some Suggestions For Busy But Committed Parents

You Can Keep Up With The Upcoming Debate Topics.

If your child is on a debate team, every month during the competitive season, your child will receive the topics for next month's tournament. Ask your child or their coach for a copy of the topics and keep them posted on the refrigerator or another public place in your house. This way, you can be aware of the upcoming topics and they can be a subject for

conversation in the house. If your child's debating is limited to classroom debating, ask the teacher what topics are coming up so that you can include them, for example, in dinner-table conversations.

You Can Help With Background Research.

Take a few minutes and come up with a few arguments or ideas about each topic. You might even read an article or two about the issues, so you will be able to give ideas to your child and question them about different aspects of each topic. This doesn't mean you need to do exhaustive research, or to do their work for them, but even a little thinking about the issues will help your child get the benefit of your ideas and experience.

You Can Give Your Child Access To The World

Did you know that there's a website with live links to every online newspaper, TV and radio station in the world? That includes, of course, every newspaper, TV and radio station in the US – but it goes WAY beyond that.

Here's the link: <http://www.abyznewslinks.com/>

Think of this - if the upcoming debate topic concerns immigration to the US from Mexico, imagine the fun you and your child could have together reviewing Mexico-based English-language TV and newspaper coverage of the immigration debate! And if you are a Spanish-speaking family (or if your child is learning Spanish), think of the great source materials that will be available when your child has access to every Spanish-language newspaper, TV and radio station in Mexico and other countries in Central and South America?

Likewise, whether your family speaks Vietnamese, Chinese, Arabic, French, Hindi or really any of the world's languages – through this one website your child can have deep access to all the news and events in every country where that language is spoken.

There's so much more! As you know, content available on world media isn't limited to hard news. Every newspaper, TV and radio station has "soft" features on all kinds of topics from music to art to science to local human-interest stories. If your child is heading into a debate on animal control, for example, imagine the fun they could have with a story from Australia about a crazed kangaroo invasion of a small Outback town, or a story on how communities in Florida are dealing with Burmese Pythons that are multiplying in the local marshes. (Sure makes a local "stray dogs" news story pale by comparison, doesn't it?)

You Can Initiate And Lead Dinnertime Conversation.

Having conversations with your debater about current events over pizza or burgers will help them develop a firm understanding of the topic. Challenging, even interrupting with arguments from the opposite side will help keep your young debater on their toes. And if your young debater has brothers or sisters, you just know they will be happy to join in hoping to catch their sibling in a factual error!

You Can Make Practice Family Fun

The only way to improve as a debater is to practice. Having your debater practice in front of a small (more-or-less) friendly audience will be helpful. Encourage your child to deliver practice speeches for you and other members of the family. Be supportive of their growth and practice – it can be

very intimidating to speak in public and it will help to practice in front of family members.

Maybe You Can Host Debate Working Sessions

Many student debaters like to work with members of their team after school or in the evenings. You can help by inviting your child's debating partners over for "work sessions" at your house so they can continue practicing and preparing for debate – maybe while enjoying a snack or even a cookout. Every family is different with different resources and some of the other kids may not have parents who can be involved this way so if you have the time, space and energy to host these get-togethers then everybody will benefit tremendously – but especially your own kid. "Your Mom (or Dad) is so cool" is something every child, whether they admit it or not, would love to hear. An added benefit for your child will be that they will be seen by their peers as someone who cares about them and wants to share their home and family with them, not as charity or showing off but out of simple goodheartedness. This is a great lesson in sharing what you have with your friends, one that will stay with and benefit your child for the rest of their life.

Can You Go To Your Child's Tournaments?

Consider going to debates to show support for your school's debate team. Even if your child says they get nervous if you watch them debate in public, they will appreciate it if you make the effort to attend. Some debaters may even find that they like having you as an audience – often, parents are much more nervous than their children! If you do go to tournaments, check with your child's coach to see how you can help, if at all, at the tournament. Make sure you work with the coach to make the tournament a big success.

Can You Be A Judge?

Even if you never serve as a judge at a tournament, you should consider learning to judge or going through your league's judge certification training program. If you learn the skills associated with judging debates, you can help your student debater better understand the kinds of decisions judges make and how to better communicate with judges. (Adapted from "Support Your Student Debater", www.middleschooldebate.com)

Debate & ESL In The Classroom

Debate and ESL - Classroom Naturals

Research shows conclusively that debate is an excellent activity for language learning because it engages students in a variety of cognitive and linguistic challenges. This section is an adaptation of an original paper by a talented ESL teacher in Japan (linked to below) and we hope that it offers new ways to use debate to provide challenging, fun and effective learning experiences for ESL students.

There are so many advantages to debate as an ESL teaching tool. In addition to providing meaningful listening skills along with strong speaking and writing practice, debate is also highly effective for developing critical thinking and argumentation skills.

Davidson (1996) wrote that "with practice, many students show obvious progress in their ability to express and defend ideas in debate [and] they often quickly recognize the flaws in each other's arguments." Nisbett (2003) declares: "Debate is an important educational tool for learning analytic thinking skills and for forcing self-conscious reflection on the validity of one's ideas (2010)."



In Italy where debate is integrated across the national curriculum, Cinganotto (2014) writes "It is easy to understand the strong belief in the power of debate especially for the enhancement of language competences, with particular reference to the communicative functions relevant for reaching agreement in a team, connecting phrases and sentences through logical connectors, supporting someone's point of view with evidence."

Fukuda (2003), in a debate study conducted with Japanese students, found that "before the debates only 30.8% of the students were not afraid of expressing their opinions when they were not the same as others'. After the debate this figure rose to 56.7%." He went on to say that "the knowledge or skills which came from the practice in the debates led the students to become more accustomed to expressing opinions."

Debate fits perfectly with the kind of class interactions that lead to successful ESL learning. "Teams of debaters are usually arranged as mixed abilities groups, in order to facilitate peer learning: more skillful students can tutor and coach the weaker ones, helping them to learn and improve their skills to make the team get a good result." (Cinganotto (2014)

These research studies and many others suggest that, although debate can be quite challenging at first, motivated non-native speakers can successfully develop the debating skills and language fluency benefits described in the research literature as well as a variety of very practical professional, business and cultural skills that will be of real benefit..

This may be a good time to view this excellent 6 minute video on using debate in the ESL classroom)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaE472sOvZO>

Debate & ESL In The Classroom

Class Session Plan

Class One: Introduction to Debate

1. Introduce & discuss the basic terms

- **A Debate** is a game in which two opposing teams give evidence and reasons that support their opinion and disagree with the evidence and reasons of the other team.
- **A Resolution** is the statement of opinion that the debaters disagree on and give speeches with evidence that supports their different points of view.
- **The Affirmative team** agrees with the resolution/opinion and gives evidence why.
- **The Negative team** disagrees with the resolution/opinion and gives evidence why.
- **The Rebuttal** is the process, or the way that debaters disagree with each other.
- **The Judge(s)** decide the winner based on the best presentation and evidence.

Watch this 4-minute video as a class to review these terms

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yi6lm-Sb6Vw>

2. Discuss Resolutions, Opinions and Reasons

A resolution/opinion is a statement, supported by good reasons, that is open to valid disagreement, also supported by good reasons. The challenge of the sport of debating is that the debaters must each take a "Pro" or "Con" position, and then either agree or disagree with the resolution as strongly and competently as possible, regardless of what they personally believe. This makes debate an exercise in considering new or alternative points of view based on evidence, reasoning and logic.

An opinion is often introduced by an **opinion indicator**:

- "I think/believe that smoking should be banned in public places..."
A reason explains why that opinion is held and can be introduced by a **reason indicator**:
- **Discuss Strong Reasons compared with Weak Reasons**
- According to LeBeau, Harrington, Lubetsky (2000), a strong **Reason** has the following qualities:
 - it logically supports the **opinion**.
 - it is specific and states the **idea** clearly.
 - it is convincing to a **majority** of people.
 - It is supported by credible evidence

To give examples of **strong reasons** versus **weak reasons**, the teacher can develop a multiple-choice exercise such as the following:

Resolved: "Smoking should be banned in public places because..."

- it is bad for your health
- it causes bad breath and makes teeth yellow
- research shows that secondhand smoke is harmful to nonsmokers
- It hurts babies.

Debate & ESL In The Classroom

- It pollutes the air
- It infringes on the rights on non-smokers
- It wastes money
- It is a sin

The students can be asked to explain why some reasons are strong and others are weak.

A Fun Exercise: Break your students into pairs and have them practice generating reasons for resolutions/opinions.

Part 1: With your partner, think of at least two strong reasons for each of these four resolutions/opinions.

1. Women should quit their job after they get married.

REASON:

REASON:

2. Love is more important than money.

REASON:

REASON:

3. It is better to be married than single.

REASON:

REASON:

4. Writing by hand is better than writing by computer.

REASON:

REASON:

Part 2: Now let's compare all the reasons given by every pair of students in the class and decide which reasons are the strongest and find out why

4. Wrap-up Discussion & Follow-up Assignment

- The teacher explains that issues that people clearly and strongly disagree on are the best kinds of resolutions for debate.
- Discuss the differences between a controversial issue - "the death penalty should be banned", or "illegal immigrants should be deported" - and less divisive issues like - love is more important than money; honesty is always the best policy.
- For homework have the students brainstorm a list of resolutions. Students can get their ideas from topics discussed in class or topics that interest them personally. When the students hand in their list of resolutions the teacher can select the best for use in later classes, along with examples of good & bad ways to phrase a resolution.

Here is a noisy but fun 5-minute video showing people from multiple cultures paired-off and debating a hot-button issue in an adult ESL class

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=36&v=5WOJItHYwIM

Debate & ESL In The Classroom

Class Two: How to create reasons that support opinions

1. Warm-up

Begin each lesson with a fun practice activity which gets the students generating reasons for opinions. An argumentation exercise like one called "The Devil's Advocate" (see appendix 1) is useful for this purpose and can be used multiple times simply by changing the resolutions.

Another way to practice creating reasons in support of an opinion is any prioritization task in which the students rank items on a list, giving reasons for their choices.

2. How to create reasons that support opinions

Explain that reasons must be supported by evidence. The four kinds of evidence, adapted from LeBeau, Harrington, Lubetsky (2000), are:

- **Examples:** from your own experience or from what you heard or read.
- **Common Sense:** things that you believe everybody knows.
- **Expert Opinion:** the opinions of experts based on published research.
- **Statistics:** descriptive data that also comes from published research.

Explain that if the class was discussing the opinion/resolution "Smoking should be banned in all public places" there could be four different kinds of evidence used:

1. **Example: For example/for instance/let me give an example**
Whenever I go to a restaurant or bar and there are people smoking near me, I feel that I am breathing their smoke. This makes me a smoker even though I don't want to be.
2. **Common Sense: Everyone knows/ if...then/it's common knowledge that**
Secondhand smoke is very unhealthy for nonsmokers.
3. **Expert Opinion: According to.../to quote.../the book _____ says...**
According to the Environmental Protection Agency, "secondhand smoke causes approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths in nonsmokers each year."
4. **Date/Statistics:**
According to (source), secondhand smoke causes about 250,000 respiratory infections in infants and children every year (where), resulting in about 15,000 hospitalizations each year.

Debate & ESL In The Classroom

3. Practice

Have the students practice *creating* the different kinds of supporting evidence – "examples" & "common sense", and *researching* other kinds – "statistics" & expert opinion", from resolution/opinions that they came up with in the prior class. In this example, you could have a few anti-smoking websites like CDC.gov and smokefreekids.org written on the board along with other pro & con websites as suggested resources. Then have class members who know how to use devices such as their smartphones to look up information help other class members learn how to access the sample databases. Work with the class to research the "Expert Opinion" evidence above:

"According to the Environmental Protection Agency, secondhand smoke causes approximately 3,000 lung cancer deaths in nonsmokers each year."

Suggestion: select that entire quote and paste it into the Google search bar to show your ESL students that sometimes the simplest way to research a statement of fact or opinion can be just to copy and paste it into a search bar rather than struggling to construct a search phrase.

Class Three: Learning How Actual Debating Works

1. Warm-up

Do an argumentation exercise (see class two warm up).

2. Form Teams

Two or three students to a team, as many teams as needed.

3. Considering Resolutions

Give each team a choice of resolutions culled by the teacher from the ones previously generated by the students. If there is a topic that has the students' special attention, perhaps something in the news or something happening in the community, then have the students create a set of resolution/opinions around that topic to work with. The idea is to get the students engaged with topics that turn them on.

4. Selecting Resolutions and Sides

Pair up two teams and have them compare their lists and decide on a resolution for their debate. They then pick sides - affirmative or negative.

Debate & ESL In The Classroom

5. Experiencing Organized Debate Structure

Explain that one of the keys to debate is following a timing structure that forces debaters to be well-organized and think quickly:

Speech 1 – two minutes: Affirmative team member #1 is the **first affirmative speaker** and introduces the topic and states the affirmative team's first argument.

Speech 2– two minutes: Negative team member #1 is the **first negative speaker** and states their first argument.

Speech 3– two minutes: The **second affirmative team speaker** states their second argument.

Speech 4– two minutes: The **second negative team speaker** states their second argument.

Give a 5-10 minute break for each team to prepare their rebuttal speech.

Speech 5– three minutes: The **negative team** states two rebuttals for the affirmative team's two arguments and summarizes their own two reasons.

Speech 6– three minutes: The **affirmative team** states two rebuttals for the negative team's two arguments and summarizes their own two reasons.

6. Brainstorming the evidence

Clarify for the students that each argument consists of a stated reason followed by support using one or more of the four kinds of evidence. Ask the class what they are.

This might also be a good place to discuss briefly the nature of peer-reviewed research as evidence, explaining the difference between published peer-reviewed research that can be cited confidently as evidence and the kind of unsupported 'research' that is commonly found on the internet. Discuss why having verifiable sources of information used as evidence matters in everyday life.

With the just-completed debate as the focus, have the students brainstorm all the reasons used in support or rejection of the/opinion resolution and then select the best two examples of each of the four kinds of evidence.

The teacher should model brainstorming on the board to visually demonstrate how the brainstorming process works.

Debate & ESL In The Classroom

7. Homework

Have the students each complete one new argument with accompanying reasons. They may work alone or in pairs according to the team they were on in this classroom exercise.

Note: it is not acceptable for students to write the arguments in the student's First Language and then translate into English. Arguments should be written as they are to be presented in debate - using clear and simple English that can be easily understood by peers.

Class Four: Predicting and preparing to refute arguments

1. Warm-up

Do argumentation exercise (see class two warm up).

2. Predicting the Other Team's Arguments

Considering each of the four kinds of evidence, each team brainstorms a list of strong reasons that their opponents could use.

3. Practice the four basic steps in rebuttal

- **STEP 1: "They say ..."**
 - State the argument that you are about to refute so that the judges can follow easily. You should take notes during your opponent's speeches so you will be clear about exactly what they have argued so that you can re-state it in your own terms.
 - **"The other team said that** smoking is harmful for nonsmokers."
- **STEP 2: "But I disagree..." Or "That may be true, but..."**
 - **"That may be true, but** I think that if nonsmokers want to avoid cigarette smoke, they can walk away from it."
- **STEP 3: "Because ..."**
 - **"Because** nonsmokers should look out for their own health."
- **STEP 4: "Therefore..."**
 - **"Therefore** it is not the responsibility of smokers to protect nonsmokers."

4. Writing Rebuttals

The students compose short rebuttals in advance for three of the opposing team's strongest arguments that they have just predicted.

5. Giving Feedback

The teacher meets with each group and reviews their arguments and rebuttals, challenging students to question their reasoning.

Debate & ESL In The Classroom

Student Speech Showing Use Of Evidence

- **Resolution:** Personality is more important than looks. (Affirmative argument)
- **Reason:** People never lose interest in looking at a person who has a good personality and living with them always makes us feel pleasant.
- **Support:**
 - **Example**
 - For example, my friendly neighbor in China has twin brothers. The elder brother married a very beautiful girl. But after the first month, he had a quarrel with her because the beautiful wife spent all of her time dressing herself up without doing any housework. And she always went out on dates with many boyfriends. Finally he divorced his beautiful wife last year. But the younger brother who married an ordinary looking girl with a good personality has a very happy married life now and they have a lovely 3 year old baby now.
 - **Common sense**
 - In China it is said, "Don't choose beautiful person to be your wife." Because the beautiful wife spends more time dressing herself up without doing housework or childcare than the not beautiful wife. And the beautiful wife always spends a lot of money on clothing and cosmetics.
 - **Expert opinion & Statistics**
 - Psychologists at Yale University investigated 3,519 married men's life spans. According to the report, the men who married a beautiful wife had a shorter life than the men who married a not beautiful wife. The degree of beauty was in direct proportion to the husbands' lifespans. In the study, there was a scale of 1-20 points: 20 points is the most beautiful wife and 1 point the least beautiful wife. The result was that men who had a wife who scored 1-12 points lived 12 years longer than men whose wife scored 13-20 points.

Fun With Impromptu Speaking

Here's a fun impromptu debating approach that always generates excitement.

- Let's say the class has 16 students. The teacher throws out a subject and then the class, divided into groups of four, has 30 minutes to research the topic on their phones or tablets.
- None of the groups is told whether they are going to be pro or con – they have to look at all sides.
- Then the groups are randomly given the Pro or Con side, and then each group has 10 more minutes to nominate a speaker for their group's position.
- The groups prepare their speakers with as many speaking points as possible, and then each group's speaker has three minutes impromptu speaking time to address the subject.
- After the speakers are finished, all the students vote anonymously on whether the Pro or Con position was best supported with persuasive evidence and argument and on the best speakers for the Pro and Con positions.
- For some extra interest, have the speakers for each position come back and speak for two minutes in favor of the key points of their opponents' positions.

Debate & ESL In The Classroom

Class Five: Judging and final practice

1. Warm-up

Do argumentation exercise (see class 2 warm up).

2. Judging



The students will be the judges. In the judging form below, the students must show evidence that they have listened carefully. The teacher can evaluate the judging forms to give students an incentive to put effort into judging.

Speech 1: The Affirmative Team's First Argument

Note: the same format is used for speech 1-4

Summarize the REASON here:

Is this reason clear? ____/1 Is this reason strong? ____/1

Summarize the SUPPORT here:

Is the support clear? ____/1 Good examples/common sense: ____/1
Expert opinion/statistics: ____/1

Speech 5: The Negative Team's Rebuttal

Note: the same format is used for speech 5-6 (four rebuttals)

REBUTTAL for the first argument:

They disagree because...

Therefore...

Is this rebuttal clear? ____/1
Did they use a strong because and therefore? ____/1

3. Judging Practice

To give the students practice in judging, have the class watch a video of a debate that you have chosen from YouTube for its relevance, fill in the judging form, and then compare results.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5hJo_5XVEE&feature=youtu.be

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SbtQqtisci8&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PFc9Pogz94&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMEwVXv2aQc&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqjHz9laqgU&feature=youtu.be>

Debate & ESL In The Classroom

4. Final Practice

The students practice delivering their argument speeches and doing rebuttals against their own arguments.

Note: if students have no experience or are shaky in public speaking, the teacher could devote an additional class before the debate to provide training in essentials such as: eye contact, pacing, pausing, gesture.

Class Six: The Debate

- During the debate:
 - students not speaking fill in the judging form during the debate
 - students can consult with a partner for help with clarification after each debate.
 - If there are observers they also fill in judging forms
- Following the debate:
 - the students submit the judging forms, the teacher adds up the scores and announces the winners.
- Also, the students hand in their argument and rebuttal speeches for which the teacher provides feedback on strong points and things to work on.



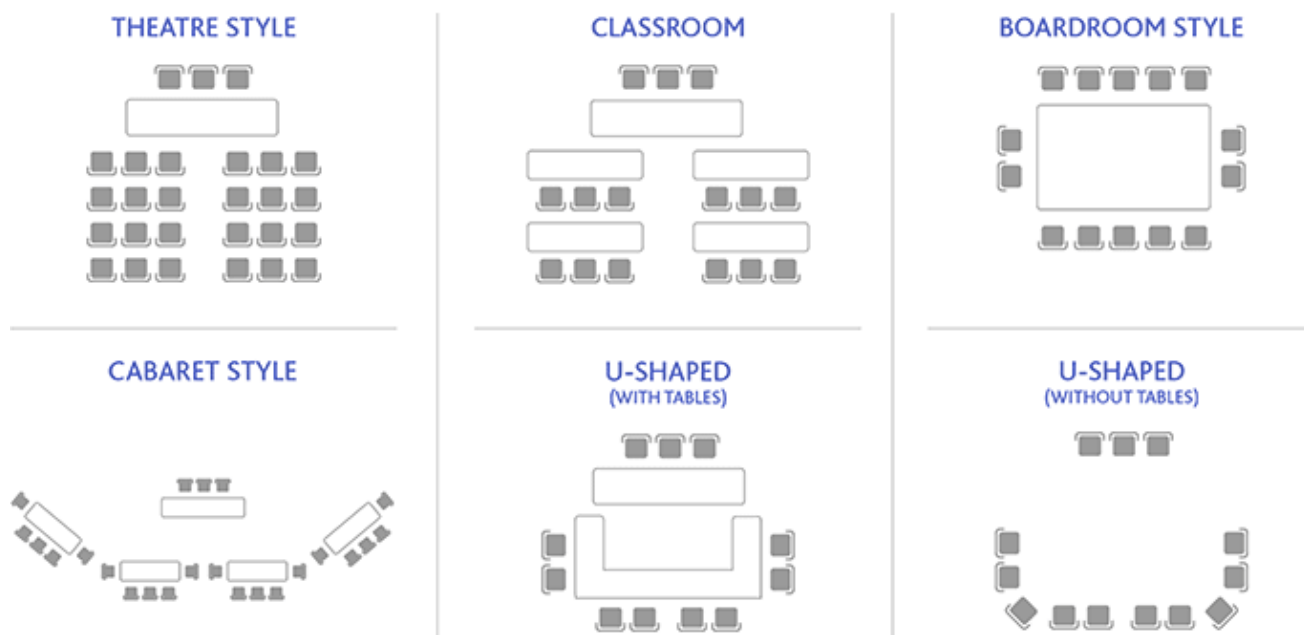
Debate & ESL In The Classroom

The Devil's Advocate

- Form into pairs. Each person will have 90 seconds to argue one side of a resolution. When given the command "SWITCH," take a 15 second pause then each person will then have 90 seconds to argue the opposite side of the same resolution.
 - Then after a rest of two minutes, each pair moves on to a second Resolution. Resolutions like these can provoke vigorous discussion - be sure to review the rules regarding respectful evidence-based disagreement:
1. All citizens who do not vote should have to pay a fine
 2. Video games containing violence should be banned
 3. Women should stop working when they get married and have babies.
 4. Anyone who insults a person's religion should be punished
 5. No one should be allowed to criticize the government
 6. Art is more important than science
 7. It is not necessary to know more than one language - English

Format for Interactive Debate

Seating Arrangement: In addition to two-person debates where pairs of students sit or stand facing each other there are many other possible arrangements. Here are just a few: of the more formal styles that your class may want to experiment with.



(Adapted from) **Teaching Debate to ESL Students: A Six-Class**

Unit By Daniel Krieger, Siebold University, Nagasaki Japan <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Krieger-Debate.html>

CREATING YOUR WORLD DEBATING FORUM VIRTUAL IN-CLASS DEBATE SPACE

We hope you're reading this book because you're already a member of World Debating Forum and are already using the resources there on Virtual In-Class Debate.

There are some exciting new options for stimulating learning and great social interaction in virtual space online as well as in traditional classroom and community spaces. In this chapter we're going to take the 10,000' view and will link you to a lot of useful sources for your group, class, team or family to use in creating your own World Debating Forum virtual in-class debate program and space.

There's extensive research that shows that the best learning comes from student involvement in either/both in-class and formal debating. This is where thinking on your feet is best learned – within the virtual debate arena.

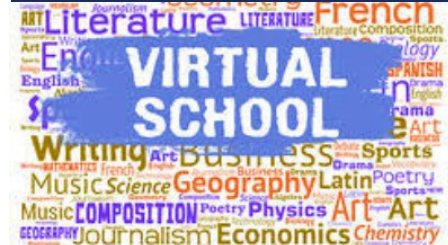
We believe that both in-class and formal debating, in both Physical and Virtual classrooms and venues, are the most effective and efficient ways to educate our children on any subject matter, and about any complex issue, while offering them great opportunities for meaningful social interaction at the same time.

By providing structure, rules, and focus for the virtual classroom dialogue, student-centered learning through online debate gives everyone a chance to speak, involves everyone in problem-solving, encourages all students to go deeper into subject matter, recognizes individual and group accomplishment, and provides an element of fun and competition that is hard to achieve any other way in virtual classes.

The ancient teaching method of Debate has suddenly charged to the front of contemporary virtual education, largely because it is remarkably well-adapted to online learning and social interaction. By providing universally accepted and understood structures, processes, rules and boundaries for evidence-based discussions, debate takes ordinary conversation into the realm of methodical fact-based inquiry.

Techniques of classic debate handed down to us from Forums of Athens and Rome have now morphed into advanced teaching tools used everywhere from medical schools to prisons, from marginalized urban schools to science PhD programs.

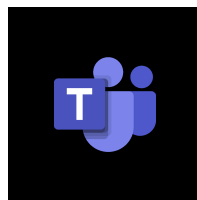
"Perhaps, with the radical changes in education brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, In-Class Debates time has come. Technology offers great promise both for inclusion and for individual personalization, using AI to scale teaching approaches that emphasize process skills globally. That potential, coupled with the constant human yearning for freedom of speech and expression of the kind that In-Class, Across-The-Curriculum Debate offers, gives us great hope for generates and supports, offers great hope."



Technology Considerations For Virtual Debating

We won't get overly technical on equipment recommendations for In-Class Virtual debating because whether the meeting platform will be Zoom, MS Team WebEx, Skype or something a bit more obscure, everyone's equipment needs will be a little different from any recommendation. Our experience is that the WDF in-class debating system installs and runs well all the major platform environments. The World Debating Forum Foundation will help with setup and operations for larger or non-standard debating networks on an as-needed basis.

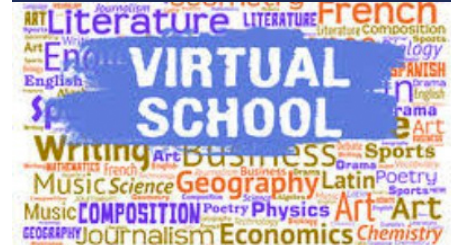
The main problem in making virtual space technology recommendations is that there are so many different systems out there. Every school system utilizes one or more of these online communications systems in addition to one or more Learning Management Systems, and compatibility issues are showing up because of the diversity of user interfaces. For the most part these issues are getting worked out much of the time by the users and their in-school tech support people and, always, by the student. The platform providers are learning from the platform users, who are learning from each other, and we're building World Debating Forum with cross-platform architecture.



We think teachers and schools need to involve students directly in making technology choices. Chances are that it will be the students who teach the adults how to set up and run the systems that will support online debating. Everybody is learning from everybody else in the virtual interaction realm.

Invest a little bit of time and effort with teachers, students and administrators and tech support working together to figure out if your existing system needs upgrading or replacing, and exactly what kind of system works best for your particular situation. The needs of an urban school and a rural school are, just on the face of it, going to be very different. Well-financed schools and under-funded schools will have different needs, as will public and charter schools. One size definitely does not fit all when it comes to setting up and running a virtual debating or learning management system.

<https://www.teachingsonline.com/zoom-review-teach-online/>



If your school is working with outdated technology, don't be reluctant to say something about it. Start with obviously your administrators and your tech people, but first be sure that you understand the assets and limitations of the technology that's currently installed so you can make fact-based arguments for the capabilities that you will need to run your learning management system effectively.

Study the costs & benefits of different systems; ideally network with other schools online and find out what they are doing and how it's working for them. Administrators have to deal with money and politics, and the better you can equip them to deal with both those difficult factors the better chance your request will get funded.

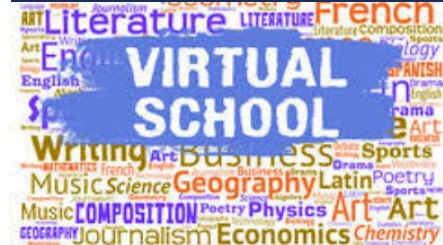
Don't be afraid to take your tech people and sit them down and say I think we should do this, and here's what I propose – what do you think? Ideally they will see your point, accept your proposal and say “Yeah, well we can do all three of those things if we go here, change this, and bring in that.” This is a much better outcome as opposed to you trying to figure it out for yourself and then present a finished plan.

People like to help other people by and large. I'm a big believer in getting on the phone and talking to somebody directly and asking for their help in getting something done rather than suffering in silence and trying to do it yourself. This seems to apply double with technology folks, who generally love to help other people solve problems and come up with good solutions that work.

As a summary, here are a couple of universal tips on setting up your World Debating Forum Virtual In – Class system:

Technology: You'll need to use some good video – calling software that you've become familiar with and are comfortable using. We recommend Zoom but Skype, Hangout, or Teams also work well for many people around the world. Follow all security and safeguarding advice, such as password protecting your call and avoid the likes of Zoom Bombing. Make sure you get set up properly, do one or more test runs, make sure everyone has a log in written down securely, and knows what they are doing with video, audio and the other on – screen controls. Before you start, TEST YOUR CONNECTIONS. If in doubt, find someone younger than who can help! If using Zoom, make sure you enable Zoom breakout rooms.

Technique: Holding a debate virtually requires some different etiquette. Face to face, it is usually clear when you can speak, how to interrupt politely, etc. To make things smoother online strongly recommend that people wait to be invited to speak by the chair and avoid interrupting. The group can agree to someone having "mute mike" power if desired. There are pro's and con to having "mute mike" power – might make a good debate! Participants can either wave and use pre – arranged gestures or use the messaging/raise hand functions in your World Debating Forum program, for example if a currently muted participant wants to speak in two – way.



Debate Democratizes Speaking

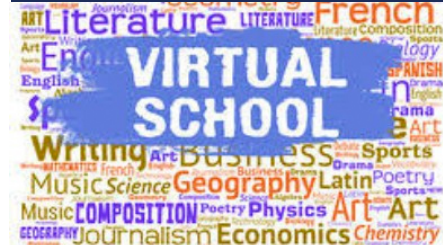
It does that almost without being noticed because it creates a structure and discipline in the background of the interaction between students who are debating that is absent in most in-class and virtual teaching, discussions, meetings, or conferences. Debate imposed a mutually-agreed discipline on all the participants and they all benefit from obeying these invisible rules of conduct and expression. Debating in a physical classroom already requires that students be more organized and communicate in a clear and efficient matter, but with Virtual In-Class Debate that requirement is increased – but with the added incentive that every social interaction becomes more fun and more productive!

The structure of debate means that all students will have an equal amount of time to speak; kids who tend to talk too much won't be able to, and those who tend to stay quiet in a “normal” class will be able to speak. More importantly, in the organized rules-based format of debate, a student who is a slow or challenged speaker will be given their respectful allotted time just the same as a highly verbal kid.

Debate also will make life easier and more interesting for teachers. Teachers conducting virtual in-class debates will be able to evaluate metrics from every student in real time, and the younger the kids the more valuable this may be. Smart verbal kids always stand out and are fairly easy to evaluate. In the online virtual debate environment everyone participates, and teachers will have more to go on, more to evaluate what special needs the quiet ones may have – because they will be participating in the debate.

Communications issues will emerge that may not have been easy to spot before because many kids with issues, both the smart and the not so smart ones, kind of bluff their way through to fourth or fifth grade simply by being silent. Helping teachers spot these issues earlier is one of many reasons why both “Virtual” and “Physical” in-class debating are really beginning to shine and show their power as a new kind of teaching tool.

Many teachers are already finding that being able to set up and run virtual online debating is no more difficult than setting up and running any virtual class except for the World Debating Forum platform that resides on top of your preferred Zoom, Google or Cisco platform. Here's how one teacher describes her experience:





"Instructions for the debate are written in a way that encourages cooperative conversation geared toward increased understanding, and discourages purely competitive styles of conversation that ignore the importance of listening, of subtlety, and concern for the collective educational good. I also use my minimal role as moderator occasionally to help shyer students enter the discussion. Finally, I privately encourage older and more confident students in the class to provide ways for their quieter classmates to contribute to the debate.

"In addition, somewhat paradoxically, the formal structure of these debates helps to promote inclusion of more students in the discussion. In free-form discussion, confident students tend to dominate, and that confidence frequently derives as much from privilege as it does from ability. By contrast, when students know that they have a particular role to play in a discussion, and that other students are counting on them to fulfill that role, more of them tend to participate. "

"When students realize (usually about midway through the first debate) that I really am not going to interfere at all with the course of the discussion, various students step into leadership positions. I have watched some of the brighter students at the end of the class spontaneously sum up a debate's major points and point out important issues that did not get raised. Others watch out for quieter students, creating spaces for them to speak by (politely) interrupting the more frequent participants. Still others audition wacky ideas they hesitated to raise during regular class discussion. Within this heady atmosphere of student autonomy, the debate format provides a residual exoskeleton of structure that keeps students from feeling lost."

Sounds like fun, doesn't it? You'll find that the WDF platform is easy to configure to meet almost any Virtual Space needs, and will let you convert an existing online teaching/learning space into a Virtual In-Class Debate space. Under the current pandemic many students and teachers who are working in virtual space can't wait to get back into shared physical space, and all the lessons learned from Virtual In-Class Debate are easily ported over into physical space.

Having the WDF platform available back in the physical classroom for use either as an "on-call" or "full-time" teaching tool will really help getting Physical in-class debating organized and running smoothly from day one.



space rather than being physically in front of the class. And to be frank, it's a lot harder for negative social interaction to occur in a Virtual debating space, like intimidating glances or little laughs that might inhibit a kid speaking in front of physical class. Because of the structure of debate, and the mutual understanding and agreement between behavior & etiquette, there's a lot less chance of classmates making fun of somebody's accent, for example.

By the way, if you're already a member you know that Worlddebatingforum.com offers a complete Spanish language website with a carefully curated collection of Spanish language debate videos and books, many of which can be closed-captioned in English as ESL for informal, almost unconscious language learning. We highly recommend using these resources in your virtual classes. And of course if you're not yet a member please join our worldwide family.

ADVANTAGES OF VIRTUAL IN-CLASS DEBATING

With the WDF platform and system, you can bring a fully functioning Virtual Debate space in just a few hours that will re-energize and get all your kids working together almost overnight with high levels of virtual social interaction. This is definitely one of the best features of World Debating Forum's Virtual In-Class Debating system – it allows a class or an entire school to move into the world of In-Class Debating seamlessly and quickly and get going with the fun, challenges and social interaction plus.

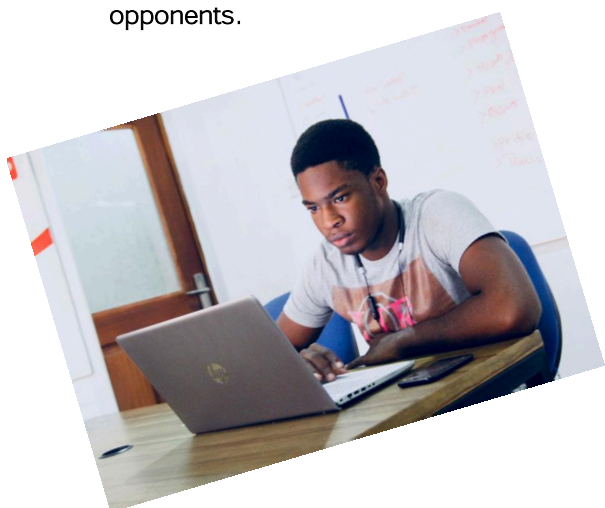
Many students, teachers and parents are unhappy about the lack of social interaction in what they see in their kid's virtual learning classes. Too much looks like it's virtually a clone of the standard classroom model where the teacher dumps information and the kids process and regurgitate it. But there are so few guidelines and models for teachers to try out and incorporate into their own classes. That's a big part of the excitement about Virtual In-Class Debating – there's more for the kids academically, and there's much more socially, than can be achieved through standard format virtual classwork. . . Virtual Debate is great for kids with every kind of learning style, contrasted with so much online learning where interaction is restricted to favor one style of learning – usually verbal – over others. Then teacher talks and kids listen. Then come the videos. Then maybe they get to ask questions. And of course everything they do is to prepare for THE BIG TEST.

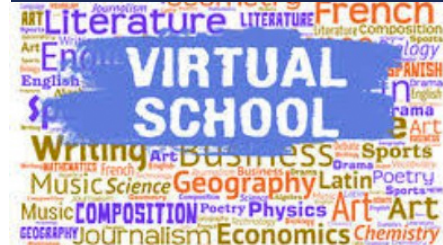
With In-Class Virtual debate all that boredom and useless busywork disappears and the kids love learning. Virtual debate also gives students with verbal, social, and auditory [learning styles](#) an opportunity to engage with each other by working with subject content in a way that is comfortable for them rather than working solely from behind a desk in a physical classroom.

In a physical classroom the library is down the hall or, if you're lucky, you're allowed to use your phone to do research. But you're still sitting in physical space along with others, reaching out from a central point for information, probably talking with each other but otherwise not interacting. In Virtual Debate, a web of information and knowledge surrounds each student in their own space, not a space shared with others physically. So when they set out as part of their debate team to find information, for example, they are more on their own, acting more independently than was possible when they were moored to a desk in a classroom. Because they aren't behind a desk, they are free to move around independently and together, socially, in virtual space.

We know the value physical social presence for growth and development – don't mistake our words. We just believe that with the stimulating environment created by debate virtual space can be in its own ways as socially fulfilling as physical space, and we think that's under-appreciated. So we're not advocating for choosing one over the other; we think that In-Class Debate works beautifully for students and teachers in both environments. Virtual Debate offers all students the kind of structure and discipline that, along with having fun, makes learning happen naturally.

In the Virtual Debate classroom kids have fun learning and they teach themselves. They don't just take what the teacher tells them and give it back on a test, they explore and learn on their own. Why? Because they want to come back from the hunt, the exploration, the research journey with information and arguments better than their opponents.





They want to go out there armed with Google and find the killer argument, the deadly fact, and then to spring at just the right moment. And they they'll spend time thinking about how best to use this great little piece of info they've just found to destroy the opposing argument tomorrow. And then tomorrow, when they do it and when it works, it feels so good that they immediately want more. In other words, they're hooked on debate.

EVERY CLASS GOES BETTER WITH IN-CLASS DEBATE

The World Debating Forum will show you how easy it is to have these kids talking to each other, researching with each other, studying with each other - all those activities are built into In-Class Debate, whether Physical or Virtual. In class debating is a structure, or matrix for a curriculum, it's not the curriculum itself so it is completely flexible. In-Class debate is used to teach every subject from [Biology and Nursing](#) to Law and Physics; students in high school, college, and [nursing/medical/law schools](#) where it is used rank it as the highest form of learning - and the most fun! In-Class debate virtually ensures, because of its built-in structures and disciplines, that participants of any age and any ability will learn more, understand more, and be able to communicate more clearly than they would from engaging in any other form of subject matter learning.

In-class debate is a way to ensure that kids who don't have a voice get a voice, that bullies don't get to dominate, that the smart and entitled people don't hog the spotlight, that everybody is motivated to work as a team. It's also a great way to get the athletes in the class far more involved than they ever are in a regular class in a physical environment. That's because in the Virtual In-Class Debate system, every student in the class participates in fun, competitive, team-based learning experiences where every kid contributes to the best of their ability. How different is that from regular classes where the jocks are asleep in the back half the time, exhausted from hours of practice and their after-school job. Oh, and no time for homework

We've published a book in support of our belief that through in-class debating the Academic and Athletic sides of school can really come together and help each other. We say to teachers "Use your athletes in the class to help you develop the teamwork aspects of debating - they will engage and learn more and the "nerds" may come to value the "jocks", and vice versa. a little more in the process.

Teamwork is also what it will take to help raise money for the foundation that supports the In – Class and Virtual debating teams with coaching and funding, and a good athletic coach will reach out to help build community support for in class debating, the debating team and the foundation, which will then reach back to support school athletics and athletes and of course everyone within the In – Class debating framework.

We've seen teachers during virtual in – class debating wearing headsets with a camera that moves with them so they can stand up and walk around their home office and wave their hands and do things to make their class more animated and engaging. They will typically have a whiteboard and some additional software to enable them to attract and hold student interest. We recommend that you buy an inexpensive camera that will help you look a lot better than the camera that's on the Computer. Especially if you are using a notebook please try to position it so the camera looks directly at your face and frames your face properly. Too many people leave it on the desk and their image is a shot from below their chin – rarely attractive. A good but inexpensive add – on camera will zoom in and out and as mentioned there are some more sophisticated ones that will actually follow you around the room as you pace and talk.

Please see our book on raising funds for your debate team/class to support this kind of technology

A DAY IN THE LIFE

So what does a typical day look like for a virtual school that incorporates in – class debate across the curriculum in multiple subjects?

The day of a Virtual In – Class Debate doesn't actually start at 8 AM the day of the debate. Since every day may be an In – Class Debate day, each day's debate is part of a process of preparation that may have begun days before. Let's say that the topic "A vs B" will be debated this week Monday/Wednesday/Friday from 10 – 12 online each day, with Tuesday & Thursday as research & preparation days. Each side of the debate will have been preparing for various parts of the debate the previous weekend. Why? because winning on Friday is going to be so much fun, and because every debate team member is WhatsApping each other all weekend with new facts,



ideas and strategies. So while prepping for In – Class Debate might superficially look a lot like homework, it's actually something far better. It's not home work, it's home fun.

Kids do homework because they have to; kids prepare for in – class debate because they want to.

Kids do homework to fill in the gaps in what the teacher wasn't able to cover; kids prepare for in – class debate because they are teaching themselves and filling in the gaps for each other.

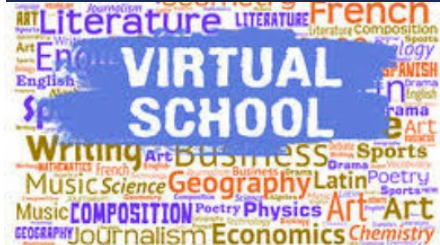
That's why at 8 AM in an in – class debating school the day starts with energy and excitement – we' re going to win the biology debate at 11am and ace the history debate at 2pm! So the teacher's job at the beginning of the virtual school day will be more a matter of channeling live – wire energy rather than overseeing morning lethargy.

The first part of the morning opening period will probably be spent going over roles and assignments for the in – class debates scheduled for that day, sharing ideas and asking for clarification on any issues left unaddressed from previous days – normal classroom housekeeping.

KEEPING THE ASSEMBLY ALIVE IN VIRTUAL SPACE

We're also a big believer in keeping or even re – instating "The Assembly" now in virtual space where whole school comes online once a week for 30 minutes with the principal. The Principal might spend 15 minutes talking about their agenda items but meanwhile everybody in the school has ability to send them an email with questions, comments or requests, and while this is going on or maybe a couple hours before and so they review the emails and decide how the Principal will respond. The WDF Virtual In – Class system can be used in "Large Group Meeting" mode to sort questions and issues for the Principal to address. Instead of a raspy voice coming over the PA system into halls and classrooms with the Principal's voice droning on, in virtual space the Principal can appear as a person and talk directly (and interactively) with each student, teacher and perhaps parent in the entire virtual school. How many physical assemblies have droned on for a half – hour without a word from anywhere but the stage.

VIRTUAL
SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES
ARE BETTER THAN
NO SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES





In a virtual assembly the Principal can set up any kind of response/chat rooms they want, and they can identify what the school is thinking and feeling by their responses and feedback to what is being discussed, planned, or proposed. Imagine a principal being able to say – "we need to change this thing about our school. The choices are this, this and this. Each class has the assignment to hold a short debate this week and get back to me with your decision about the best choice, and why."

After giving all 640 students and teachers that assignment, they may go on to announce that next week the music department is going to present a virtual symphony, and it's going to be at a certain time and the whole school can watch it. At that point the student conductor pops up in a window and has 30 seconds to generate excitement about tuning in.

And so it would go – this Virtual Assembly. Who knows – maybe even with a Pledge of Allegiance. Optional of course, and in Virtual Space.

EXCELLENT SOCIAL INTERACTION - IN VIRTUAL SPACE!

There is widespread dissatisfaction with the lack of social interaction in virtual learning. That's a little like blaming the party because you're not having any fun. Virtual space has to be made into fun space. It lacks the power of physical involvement to generate feelings of togetherness, bondedness, security, affection, trust – all those human feelings and concepts that are so important for young people to develop, and old people to retain.

But virtual space has its own virtues, and one of them is that it's possible to be inventive in whole new ways through technology – with more real exciting stuff on the way. We predict that soon we'll all be able to project ourselves into a mutual virtual reality – imagine an In-Class Debate with everyone together in a virtual space interacting "personally" rather than sitting in a chair and "interacting" through a screen. We see that reality coming and World Debating Forum will be a part of that evolution.

At its most basic level, the WDF Virtual In-Class system is all about making the school day a little bit shorter but a lot more informative with a lot more impact, and then making sure that students have something very engaging and productive (and fun) to do after school's over. we feel that it's very important for every student to be committed to something specific after school, not just hanging out with no purpose other than to hang out.

NON-TRADITIONAL HOMEWORK

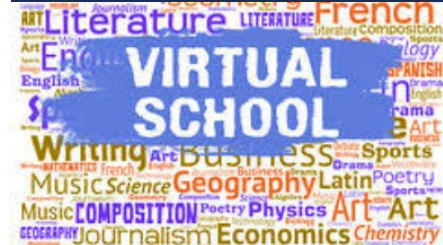
And in our in – class debating system we say you don't have any traditional "assigned" homework. Why? Because in preparing for in – class debate the students actually assign the work, not the 'homework', to themselves because they know they've got to put in a very big five minutes of presentation and argument in four classes the next day. Under this kind of imperative to prepare for debating, they will go do the research, and if they don' t it will show up very quickly and – major point here – it will show by them letting down their teammates. While blowing your homework in a conventional class may mean nothing more than a bad grade; blowing your homework in an in – class debate means that you let down your whole team right out in public for everyone to see. And because of your failure to do your homework, all your other team members, who maybe did do their homework and who were prepared – all of them have now lost because you blew your own self – assigned homework. That's motivation on steroids. What kid, who might not care at all about regular homework, would want to be in that position?

SPOTTING DIFFICULTIES EARLY

What' s also going to show up is if a student may have some home issues that aren't allowing them to perform. Whether its relationship issues with the family and or technical issues with having the right equipment, there's lots of help for family issues and in many communities there are agencies we can go to get kids the right equipment. I mean not everywhere but for the most part if somebody needs a computer, there's a way to get it. A lot of foundations and companies are trying to make sure that students have what they need. If Wi Fi accessibility is an issue in the community work with the cellular companies to make sure that they will help support the system through hotspots. If a student's home doesn't have a good WiFi system then perhaps they can just access the online environment through cellular data – if it is available free.

If you embrace virtual debate with a positive attitude and get it organized to suit your own school's online classes you're quickly going to say, wow, this is going to be great! We guarantee that it is even going to be greater when you take all the ideas and all suggestions that are in our book on this virtual way of doing in class debating and then take them back into brick and mortar, where you'll find they'll be even more effective.

Because we do believe that kids need to get back into the physical classroom. There's no doubt about that. But we also believe that while we are all trying to live, work and learn in virtual space, the process of in – class debating in the virtual classroom and workplace adds value and excitement to every aspect of our educations, our businesses and our everyday lives.



Virtual In – Class Debating Resources

Virtual Class Learning Management Systems (LMS) Directory

<https://elearningindustry.com/directory/software-categories/learning-management-systems/features/synchronous-virtual-classroom>

A very widely – accepted European Open – Source LMS platform – free and open to full modification

<https://claroline.net/>

This is generally considered to be one of the top LMS all – round platforms

<https://www.proprofs.com/training/solutions/virtual-classroom-software/>

Here's a video on ProProfs:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_pwLfSsQko

Here are some additional top LMS platforms

<https://www.d2l.com/en-eu/resources/videos/virtual-classroom-brightspace/>

<https://www.ntaskmanager.com/>

<https://www.proofhub.com/>

<https://www.vedamo.com/>

<https://www.learncube.com/>

Social interaction requirements for virtual learning

<https://elearningindustry.com/social-interaction-in-online-courses-discussion-activating-learning>

<https://www.cae.net/social-lms-increases-learner-engagement/>

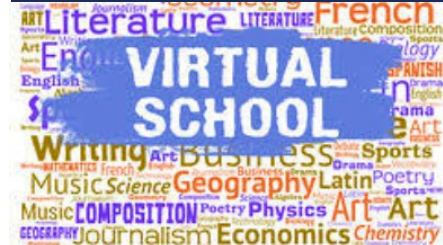
Social LMS platforms that emphasize social interaction

<https://www.coursesites.com/>

<https://www.dokeos.com/dokeos-community-edition/>

<http://moodle.org/>

<https://www.schoolology.com/>



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<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00028533.2001.11951670>

Resources

Great Videos - Click or Use Your Phone To Connect!



In this video a great teacher is shown working with her students to encourage classroom debate – this is a highly motivating video that shows what can be accomplished in the classroom with just a minimum of direction.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DowgTXvI580>

This is a great collection of videos of full debates featuring all ages – plenty of ideas for classroom and more formal debating too.

<https://noisyclassroom.com/category/oracy-videos/videos-of-full-debates/>

This is a fun full-length video of Australian kids debating the use of “lollipops”. The dramatic gestures and language used by the kids as they debate whether lollipops are a proper way to reward performance are priceless. (45 minutes)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMF2YF306jY>



A “Beginner’s Guide To Debate” offers a very detailed and well-presented introduction to the key skills needed for successful debating and how to develop them. The focus is on high school formal debate and shows high school debaters in action.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kezvnxqs3sw>

“7th graders can debate better than Trump and Clinton”. This is a must-watch video for anyone involved with urban schools in any way. A debate team of NYC 7th Graders from inner city schools discuss how debating has changed their lives – these are excellent young role models for kids 4th-8th grade.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYt0Hqku51M>



“Top 10 Debate Tips from Wellesley College” Wellesley College debaters give personal tips on being an effective debater – a diverse group of young women offer lots of personal reflections on how debating has helped socially as well as academically and how they see the experience affecting their futures in positive ways.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWX4q6QBEC4>

Model UN Debate in Spanish Class

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mjmX76ftwMs>



“What does the adjudicator look for in a debate?” A speaker at an orientation session explains the role that the judges will have in the upcoming event.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_LfQBcnptU

HOW TO JUDGE A DEBATE: A young Korean debater explains the role of judges in academic events.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxRMokRDN7I>



Resources

Great Videos - Click or Use Your Phone To Connect!

“The Art of Debate: Never Lose An Argument Again” This is a well-done and thoughtful video where experienced professionals discuss some useful and practical debate tactics and strategies.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LesGw274Kjo>



Members of the Harvard Debate Team, who come across as bright, regular kids, discuss the role of debating in their success from some interesting personal perspectives.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awu1AN1MZ4Y>



“Debate Skills: Argument Building”. An effectively presented video on the basic principles of building arguments in debate using animated graphics with a young narrator’s voice. Might be a bit slow-moving for some but easy to watch.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zZ4YEuThRw>



“Finding Your Voice Through Speech & Debate” – this excellent short video features an inspired high school speech/debate coach and one of his passionately dedicated students who share how their lives have been transformed by debating and public speaking.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DXTsanYNSvA&feature=youtu.be>



A great TED Talk by Daniel Cohen: “For Argument’s Sake”. What makes a good argument? Are there certain principles that, if followed, virtually guarantee a positive outcome? These and other questions are discussed in an intelligent and thoughtful way.

https://www.ted.com/talks/daniel_h_cohen_for_argument_s_sake



“The Science Of Argumentation”: Kevin Paiz-Ramirez. This video discusses the kind of mindset it takes for students to be able to create and learn from scientific arguments – the kind of debating that lies at the heart of scientific discovery.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MWkN9ilo6I&feature=youtu.be>



“What Does Debating Have In Common With Magic?": Amanda Moorghen. In this beautifully presented TED talk Amanda first goes through “Harry Potter” analyzing Harry’s transformative experiences and then segways to her own transformative experiences with students as a debate teacher.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBuVAs0s--I&feature=youtu.be>



“Everyone Is A Debater”: Ken Johnson. A college debate coach & teacher shares his ideas on how debate can serve as a tool to help us sort out and decide what are the ‘revolutionary, awesome ideas that we should invite into our own life.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlorefP3i60&feature=youtu.be>



“Debating can change your life”: Lucinda David. Lucinda makes a reasoned and passionate argument for “Taking back debating and reclaiming public discourse” by sharing some interesting and dramatic personal stories.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJaMtU1P-3w&feature=youtu.be>



Resources

Great Videos - Click or Use Your Phone To Connect!



A video for teachers encouraging classroom debate – highly motivating
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DowgTXvI580>



A great collection of videos of full debates featuring all ages – plenty of ideas
<https://noisyclassroom.com/category/oracy-videos/videos-of-full-debates/>



Australian kids debating the use of “lollipops” (45 minutes). Why is this in a High School debate book resource section? Because it's a lot of fun and the kids are great! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMF2YF3O6jY>



A well-written and produced teacher's guide to encouraging Student Debate (requires login)
<https://learn.teachingchannel.com/video/encourage-student-debate-getty>



A debate team of NYC 7th Graders from inner city schools discuss how debating has changed their lives - excellent young role models
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYt0Hqku51M>



Wellesley College debaters give personal tips of being an effective debater
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jWX4q6QBEC4>



Entertaining video covering the basic principles of debating <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LesGw274Kjo>



Members of the Harvard Debate Team members discuss the basis for debate success on a personal but elevated level
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awu1AN1MZ4Y>

Resources

Debate Videos For Teachers/Parents (continued)



A very effective video on the basic principles of debate discussed using animated graphics with a young narrator's voice

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zZ4YEuThRw>

This is an excellent free online course in debate judging

<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/adjudicating-speech-and-debate>



“The lost art of democratic debate” Michael Sandel

[https://www.ted.com/talks/](https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_sandel_the_lost_art_of_democratic_debate)

[michael_sandel_the_lost_art_of_democratic_debate](https://www.ted.com/talks/michael_sandel_the_lost_art_of_democratic_debate)

“How To Disagree Productively And Find Common Ground” Julia Dahr

[https://www.ted.com/talks/](https://www.ted.com/talks/julia_dhar_how_to_disagree_productively_and_find_common_ground)

[julia_dhar_how_to_disagree_productively_and_find_common_ground](https://www.ted.com/talks/julia_dhar_how_to_disagree_productively_and_find_common_ground)



Resources

Classroom Debate Lesson Plans

[Educationworld.com](#) is a great academic resource website, including these classroom debate lesson plans created by teachers from around the world. They offer a wide range of how-to ideas for integrating debate into different kinds of classroom activities.

[Using Fairy Tales to Debate Ethics](#) (All Grades)

"What better way to spark a spirited classroom debate on ethics than by exploring the complex messages often found in three classic fairy tales -- Puss in Boots, Jack and the Beanstalk, and (just for fun) a Tibetan tale, From the Elephant Pit! You'll find plenty of tips for managing an ethics debate in the elementary or middle school classroom."

[Discussion Webs in the Classroom](#) (All Grades)

"Discussion Webs are a great way to engage students in meaningful conversation and spark critical thinking at the same time. Included: Tons of ideas for active discussions across the curriculum and across the grades!"

[Human Nature: Good or Evil?](#) (Grades 6-12)

"Students learn how to stage a debate and write essays in response to the question "Is human nature inherently good or inherently evil?""

[Beam Me Down Scotty](#) (Grades 9-12)

"Students explore information about the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI) and debate the existence of life on other planets."

[Take a Stand!](#) (Grades 3-12)

"Students learn how to share their opinions on an issue using a respectful discussion/debate approach. They learn to formulate a clear written statement of their opinions."

[In Your Opinion: Are Athletes Heroes?](#) (Grades 6-12)

"Students define the words 'debate', 'pro', and 'con'. Students clearly express oral and/or written opinions about whether people should view athletes as heroes."

[The Problem With Profiling](#) (Grades 6-12)

"Students explore the issue of racial profiling using facts and evidence and post their conclusions to a youth message board."

[Making Good Decisions](#) (Grades K-3)

In this lesson, students practice balancing different interests involved in solving social problems, looking for the most realistic solution based on the advantages and disadvantages. They also explore the concept of compromise.

[Effective Speaking in a Debate](#) (Grades 9-12)

Debate students come to understand that how they express an idea is just as important as what they say. Learning to make effective persuasive arguments while dealing with emotions will bring success to every debate team.

Resources

[Battle Bars: The Edible Argument](#) (Grades 9-12)

Students use their writing skills to describe how their group's Snickers are a better buy than another group's Kit Kats, while the other group describes how its Kit Kats are a better buy than Snickers. Students use examples of price, advertising appeal, ease of consumption, appearance, dangers, nutrition facts, feel, smell, and taste to support their topic.

[Stage A Debate - A Primer For Teachers](#)

This lesson presents several basic debate formats, including the popular Lincoln-Douglas format. In addition, it provides adaptation suggestions for using debates with whole classes and small groups. Plus, it offers ten strategies teachers can use to make the debate process more interesting to students.

Classroom Debate Strategies & Games

The following dynamic strategies engage students at all grade levels and involve the entire class in lots of different ways. You might consider setting up these strategies as a weekly series to engage students for an entire semester in exploration of all the fun and challenging ways that debate fits into classroom learning.

1. Three-Card strategy

This technique can be used as a pre-debate strategy to help students gather information about topics they might not know a lot about. It can also be used after students observe two groups in a debate, when the debatable question is put up for full classroom discussion. This strategy provides opportunities for all students to participate in discussions that might otherwise be monopolized by students who are frequent participators. In this strategy, the teacher provides each student with two or three cards on which are printed the words "Comment or Question."

When a student wishes to make a point as part of the discussion, he or she raises one of the cards; after making a comment or asking a question pertinent to the discussion, the student turns in the card. This strategy encourages participants to think before jumping in; those who are usually frequent participants in classroom discussions must weigh whether the point they wish to make is valuable enough to turn in a card. When a student has used all the cards, he or she cannot participate again in the discussion until all students have used all their cards.

2. Participation Countdown strategy

Similar to the technique above, the countdown strategy helps students monitor their participation, so they don't monopolize the discussion. In this strategy, students raise a hand when they have something to say. The second time they have something to say, they must raise their hand with one finger pointing up (to indicate they have already participated once). When they raise their hand a third time, they do so with two fingers pointing up (to indicate they have participated twice before). After a student has participated three times, he or she cannot share again as long as any other student has something to add to the discussion.

Resources

3. Tag Team Debate strategy

This strategy can be used to help students learn about a topic before a debate, but it is probably better used when opening up discussion after a formal debate or as an alternative to the Lincoln-Douglas format. In a tag team debate, each team of five members represents one side of a debatable question. Each team has a set amount of time (say, 5 minutes) to present its point of view.

When it's time for the team to state its point of view, one speaker from the team takes the floor. That speaker can speak for no more than 1 minute and must "tag" another member of the team to pick up the argument before his or her minute is up. Team members who are eager to pick up a point or add to the team's argument, can put out a hand to be tagged. That way, the current speaker knows who might be ready to pick up the team's argument. No member of the team can be tagged twice until all members have been tagged once.

4. Role Play Debate strategy

In the Lincoln-Douglas debate format, students play the roles of Constructor, Cross-Examiner, and so on. But many topics lend themselves to a different form of debate -- the role-play debate. In a role-play debate, students examine different points of view or perspectives related to an issue. See a sample lesson where students assume the roles of various stakeholders in a [Role Play Debate](#).

5. Fishbowl strategy

This strategy helps focus the attention of students not immediately involved in the current classroom debate; or it can be used to put the most skilled and confident debaters center stage, as they model proper debate form and etiquette. As the debaters sit center-stage (in the "fishbowl"), other students observe the action from outside the fishbowl.

To actively involve observers, appoint them to judge the debate; have each observer keep a running tally of new points introduced by each side as the debate progresses. Note: If you plan to use debates in the future, it might be a good idea to videotape the final student debates your current students present. Those videos can be used to help this year's students evaluate their participation, and students in the videos can serve as the "fishbowl" group when you introduce the debate structure to future students.

Resources

6. Inner Circle/Outer Circle strategy

This strategy, billed as a pre-writing strategy for editorial opinion pieces, helps students gather facts and ideas about an issue up for debate. It focuses students on listening carefully to their classmates. The strategy can be used as an information-gathering session prior to a debate or as the structure for the actual debate. See a sample lesson: [Inner Circle/Outer Circle Debate](#).

7. Think-Pair-Share Debate strategy

This strategy can be used during the information gathering part of a debate or as a stand-alone strategy. Students start the activity by gathering information on their own. Give students about 10 minutes to think and make notes. Next, pair each student with another student; give the pair about 10 minutes to share their ideas, combine their notes, and think more deeply about the topic. Then pair those students with another pair; give them about 10 minutes to share their thoughts and gather more notes... Eventually, the entire class will come together to share information they have gathered about the topic. Then students will be ready to knowledgeably debate the issue at hand. See the Think-Pair-Share strategy in action in an Education World article, [Discussion Webs in the Classroom](#).

8. Four Corners Debate strategy

In this active debate strategy, students take one of four positions on an issue. They either strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. See a sample lesson: [Four Corners Debate](#).

9. Graphic Organizer strategy

A simple graphic organizer enables students to compare and contrast, to visualize, and to construct their position on any debatable question. See a sample lesson using a simple two-column comparison graphic organizer in the Education World article [Discussion Webs in the Classroom](#).

10. Focus Discussions strategy

The standard rules for a Lincoln-Douglas style debate allow students 3 minutes to prepare their arguments. The debatable question/policy is not introduced prior to that time. If your students might benefit from some research and/or discussion before the debate, you might pose the question and then have students spend one class period (or less or more) gathering information about the issue's affirmative arguments (no negative arguments allowed) and the same amount of time on the negative arguments (no affirmative arguments allowed). See a sample lesson: [Human Nature: Good or Evil?](#).

Resources

University level competition formats:

While we're strongly committed to the use of classroom debating we recognize that the competitive aspects of formal debate are a great attraction to bright young minds and spirits. There are literally hundreds of variations on formal debating because there is no one set of rules on how debates must be structured. One of the appealing things about the sport of debating is that the teams and players can decide on what kind of debate they want to have depending on circumstances and preferences.

Here's a quick summary of the 12 most common formal debate structures encountered in debating in the US, Europe, Asia and elsewhere in the world of debate. Adapted from <http://debate.uvm.edu/dcpdf/debateformatguide.pdf>

- 1. WUDC/BP World Universities Debating Championship**
- 2. NPDA/APDA American Parliamentary Debate, USA only**
- 3. Policy Debate CEDA, NDT, USA only**
- 4. Asians Format AUDC, NEAO, Asia only**
- 5. Australs Australasian format, Australasian only**
- 6. CUSID Canada only**
- 7. NFA Lincoln Douglas, USA only High school level competition:**
- 8. WSDC World Schools Debating Championship**
- 9. Karl Popper Debate IDEA**
- 10. Policy Debate, USA only**
- 11. Lincoln-Douglas Debate, USA only**
- 12. Public Forum Debate, USA only**

1. WUDC/BP

Topics: New topic for each debate.

Teams: Teams of 2, 4 teams in one debate, 2 proposition, 2 opposition, judges rank teams 1-4. Length: 60 minutes

Preparation: 15 minutes before the debate, no electronic access, only talk to partner. Interaction: Points of information from one side to the other.

Content: No quoted material, usually. Very few procedural or definitional arguments. Style: Faster than normal conversation, but accessible to all people.

Events: Worlds, Euros, Asians, Pan Africans, US, etc.

2. NPDA/APDA

Topics: New topic for each debate. Topic more binding for NPDA than APDA.

Teams: Teams of 2, 2 teams, proposition and opposition.

Length: 45 minutes

Preparation: 20-30 minutes open preparation.

Interaction: Points of information.

Content: No quoted material.

Resources

Style: Some jargon, some procedural arguments

Events: NPDA tournaments, NPTE, APDA tournaments.

3. POLICY DEBATE

Topics: One topic for entire academic year.

Teams: Teams of 2, 2 teams, affirmative and negative.

Length: 2-2.5 hours.

Preparation: Intense preparation during the entire year, extensive research. Ten minutes preparation time to be used by each team during the debate.

Interaction: Cross examination

Content: Lots of quoted material, lots of jargon, many procedural arguments, but very open to innovation if you can defend it.

Style: Usually very rapid speaking.

Events: NDT, CEDA tournaments.

4. ASIAN

Topics: Three topics before each debate, teams determine which to debate.

Teams: Teams of 3, 2 teams, government and opposition.

Length: About one hour.

Preparation: 30 minutes.

Interaction: Points of information.

Content: No quoted material, usually.

Style: A little faster than conversational, but understandable by all.

Events: UADC

5. AUSTRALS

Topics: Three topics before each debate, teams determine which to debate.

Teams: Teams of 3, 2 teams, proposition and opposition.

Length: About one hour.

Preparation: 30 minutes.

Interaction: Points of information.

Content: No quoted material, usually.

Style: A little faster than conversational, but understandable by all.

Events: Australian tournaments, Australasians.

6. CUSID

Topics: 30 minutes before the debate, but topic is very loosely interpreted.

Teams: Teams of 2, 2 teams, government and opposition

Length: Less than 60 minutes

Preparation: Most preparation done before the tournament.

Interaction: Points of information.

Content: No quoted material, usually.

Style: A little faster than conversation, but understandable by all.

Events: CUSID tournaments.

Resources

7. NFA LD

Topics: One topic for the entire academic year. Mostly topics about policy issues.

Teams: Teams of 1, two teams, affirmative and negative.

Length: About 45 minutes.

Preparation: Intense preparation and research during the year.

Interaction: Cross examination.

Content: Quoted material, prepared arguments.

Style: Appeals to an audience of average intelligent citizens.

Events: NFA tournaments. High school level competition:

8. WSDC World Schools Debating Championship

Topics: Mix of prepared and extemporaneous topics.

Teams: Teams of 3, two teams, affirmative/proposition and negative/opposition

Length: One hour

Preparation: Significant pre-tournament preparation for prepared motions, one hour preparation for extemporaneous motions with no outside help except for almanac and dictionary.

Interaction: Points of information.

Content: No quoted material, usually.

Style: Faster than normal conversation, but understandable by all.

Events: World Schools Debating Championship, Asian Schools Debating Championship, various tournaments.

9. Karl Popper Debate IDEA

Topics: Announced, usually one month in advance.

Teams: Teams of 3, two teams, affirmative and negative.

Length: 45 minutes

Preparation: Significant preparation before the debate.

Interaction: Cross examination.

Content: Quoted material allowed, but must be able to document sources.

Style: Accessible to all intelligent citizens.

Events: IDEA Youth Forum, IDEA affiliated tournaments.

10. Policy Debate, USA only

Topics: On topic for the entire academic year, concerns question of government policy.

Teams: Teams of 2, two teams, affirmative and negative

Length: 90 minutes.

Preparation: Significant preparation and research during the year. Eight minutes preparation time for each team to be used during the debate.

Interaction: Cross examination.

Content: Substantial quoted material, procedural arguments, considerable jargon.

Style: Very fast delivery.

Events: NFL tournaments, Tournament of Champions, NDCA championships.

Resources

11. Lincoln-Douglas Debate, USA only

Topics: Value topics announced in advanced.

Teams: Teams of 1, two teams, affirmative and negative.

Length: 35 minutes.

Preparation: Topics announced in advance. Three minutes preparation time for each side during the debate.

Interaction: Cross examination.

Content: Very little quoted material.

Style: Accessible to all intelligent citizens.

Events: NFL, ToC, NDCA.

12. Public Forum Debate, USA only

Topics: Announced in advance. Topics of current popular interest.

Teams: Teams of 2, two teams, pro and con, sides determined by coin flip at beginning, loser of flip can decide to speak first or second.

Length: 35 minutes.

Preparation: Significant preparation before the debate, two minutes of preparation time for each team to use during the debate.

Interaction: Crossfire, debaters take turns asking questions.

Content: Some quoted material but debate should not be driven by it

Style: Accessible to all citizens.

Events: NFL tournaments, ToC, NDCA

Resources

Resource Books & Guides



Speak Out

<https://www.amazon.com/Speak-Out-Kate-Shuster-ebook/dp/B004LZ56CC/>

"I'm teaching a co-op debate class and this book has been wonderful in covering everything I need to know and go over with the kids, highly recommended."

If They Can Argue Well, They Can Write Well: Using Classroom Debate to Help Students Think Critically, Research and Evaluate Internet Sources, and Write and Speak Argumentatively

<https://www.amazon.com/They-Argue-Well-Write-Argumentatively/dp/162950016X/>

"I love this resource, and the kids are enjoying it!"



Up for Debate!: Exploring Math Through Argument

<https://www.amazon.com/Up-Debate-Exploring-Through-Argument/dp/1625312814/>

"In this book, Chris Luzniak brings math home for students, with ideas and examples of how they can debate while learning - therefore adopting and acquiring knowledge seamlessly, without even realizing that they've unpacked their potential resistance."

Competitive Debate: The Official Guide

<https://www.amazon.com/Competitive-Debate-Richard-Edwards-Ph-D-ebook/dp/B00ANW4F4M/>

"This book is exactly what I was looking for to use for my classes. I want to use debate as a way to teach Federal Government. The book is clear and easily read. I've gotten a lot of good ideas for conducting our debates and for teaching students about argument."

Companion Guide for Speech & Debate Coaches

<https://www.amazon.com/Companion-Guide-Speech-Debate-Coaches-ebook/dp/B0749NNXKC/>

"This book contains a collection of great strategies to teach students how to argue effectively."

Basic Debate, Student Edition (DEBATE SERIES) 5th Edition

<https://www.amazon.com/Debate-Student-DEBATE-McGraw-Hill-Education/dp/0078729947/>

"I found this book excellent both as a primer as well as for the more advanced strategies of research and rebuttals that it provides."

Resources

Resource Books & Guides Cont.

Thank You for Arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson Can Teach Us About the Art of Persuasion

<https://www.amazon.com/Thank-You-Arguing-Aristotle-Persuasion/dp/0307341445>

“Originally, I purchased “Thank You for Arguing” because it was required for one of my classes. I quickly discovered, however, it was going to far exceed my expectations, and provide purely positive and practical application outside the classroom, as well.”

A Rulebook for Arguments

<https://www.amazon.com/Rulebook-Arguments-Hackett-Student-Handbooks/dp/0872209547>

“For those seeking a practical rulebook on the applications of logic, argumentation, fallacies and more, this book gives an easy to follow but robust approach.”

Being Logical: A Guide to Good Thinking

<https://www.amazon.com/Being-Logical-Guide-Good-Thinking/dp/0812971159>

“I really like its emphasis on logic as an activity - something people do, practice, and get better at, with the fine points coming into relief only through application and experience.”

Debating to Win Arguments: The Elements of Debating and How to Counter Arguments With Ease Using Logic

<https://www.amazon.com/Debating-Win-Arguments-Elements-Counter/dp/0998793655>

“You can read “Debating To Win Arguments” pretty quickly, maybe even in one evening if you’re a fast reader. Since this is an informational, and not a primarily entertaining, book, I find this to be an advantage, showing that all relevant thoughts, tips, and explanations have been expressed clearly and concisely.”

Resources

“Debate Judging Instructions for High School Tournaments” is a very good overview of the step-by-step duties of a judge in a high school debate tournament, but serves as an excellent all-round introduction for new judges. The narrator is clearly familiar with every practical aspect of running a debate event.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P8GuTHs_ac4&feature=youtu.be

“Policy Debate - How to Judge” is heavy on the theoretical model behind structured debate and offers useful perspectives on how judges can evaluate each part of the process as it unfolds before them.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPiwLmSnpSs&feature=youtu.be>

Public Forum Debate - How to Judge

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5udRf4jRX7c&feature=youtu.be>

Debate-Related Databases

A well-constructed searchable database with almost 600 detailed debate topics – mostly for older students. Arguments for and against hundreds of debate topics, written by expert debaters, judges and coaches

<https://idebate.org/debatabase>

The Power of Speech & Debate Education reviewed in detail with good resource links

<https://snfi.stanford.edu/skills>

Extensive keyword-searchable database of debating topics and resources of all kinds

<https://csus.libguides.com/pro-con/online-sources>

Unusual Debating Resources

A very interesting online debating model

<https://www.createdebate.com/>

Detailed research study of online debating – highly academic but worth reviewing

<https://cis.cornell.edu/cis-researchers-study-implications-online-debating>

Debating between Artificial Intelligence (Digital Beings?) and Human Beings – you may be surprised by the research!

<https://www.research.ibm.com/artificial-intelligence/project-debater/live/>