World Debating Forum.com



SPEECH Debate Forums ARGUMENTATION

OPEN SOURCE GUIDE FOR TEACHERS, PARENTS & STUDENTS

GRADE SCHOOL CLASSROOM DEBATE

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TEACHER'S GUIDE AND STARTER MATERIALS

With dramatic research findings like this, why wait until High School? Who can argue the obvious life-long benefits of beginning to learn debating skills as early as the Primary grades?

American Debate League: http://www.americandebateleague.org/benefits-of-debate.html

"High-risk secondary school debaters also score better on ACT and SAT tests, get into better colleges, and perform better once in college."

"Students do not need to debate forever to see results — even one or two debate experiences improves performance, though for every semester a student debates, their grades go up."

"While only 50 percent of high school students in urban schools graduate, ninety percent of urban high school debaters graduate."

"72 percent of high-risk secondary-school debaters graduate, versus just 43 percent of high-risk non-debaters."

Grade School Fun & Learning

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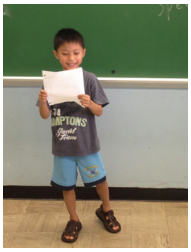








About World Debating Forum

While sports and athletics have taught me many important lessons, and so has my successful business career, some of my most powerful and useful lessons have come from many years of debate training long ago in school. That's why, with this series of Debate Guides, I would like to share what I have learned about the power of clear, civil, reasoned debate with readers like you who are working hard in support of quality education.

As we all have, I've watched our world change and evolve in so many ways – some very positive, and some quite the opposite. But whatever the challenges we face as human beings, my life experience tells me that there's solid reason to believe that we can work together successfully to make this a better and safer world for our future generations.

With the help of friends worldwide I started WorldDebatingForum.com because I truly believe that we CAN make the world a better place.

I began working for this project simply by writing posts on the value of civil discourse and debate for the World Debating Forum blog, trying to encourage others to embrace this approach to disagreeing with each other.

In the process of learning to be a blogger, I have spent many hours researching a wide range of topics – many of them new to me and requiring significant study. I have my personal beliefs, as everyone does.

But above all I believe in free and open debate and free speech. I was on a debating team in school and have seen the benefits of that experience throughout my life.

So, when I began looking into the newest research on how the kinds of thinking and communications skills learned through debate can help young people get further and do better throughout their lives I thought

"Maybe this is telling us what we need to focus on more! Maybe this is how we can help!"



We Asked - Could Learning Debate Change How We Think?

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.

"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 – and their elders?

In today's 'total immersion' world of electronic media, news and pop culture, we are all more and more exposed to ideas coming from every direction. While adults may have some defenses against this barrage of messages, children who have not learned how to think critically are wide open and vulnerable.

"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. www.cfbt.com



Why Debate Can Help Kids Grow In Important & Unique Ways

The World Debating Forum intends to change that by helping 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; Inoue and Nakano).

This Elementary School Debate Guide is our initial contribution, and it's intended to be totally open-source so that you can take it and make it your own. We all know there are so many benefits that debating can offer, as new research is confirming this all the time. Teaching our children the skills and arts of formal debate at the grade school level develops cognitive, social and communication skills leading to greater confidence and self-esteem at a young age. This self-confidence and ability to communicate improves memory, time-management & research skills and study habits even at a young age. It encourages young children to take deep interest in subjects they might otherwise shy away from, and to consider points of view they might never otherwise encounter.

Debating at both the grade school and high school levels 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.

"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; Shuster).

Debate skills carried through high school and college will open up 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 gain 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)

An analysis by Allen et al concludes that training in communication skills (including debate) measurably improves participants' critical thinking by as much as 44%

Debating promotes freedom of speech. It teaches people how to think objectively and quickly, benefitting 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, with many 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 that work inside and 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).

We at WDF are extremely passionate about our goal but, as of now, we are a small and self-funding organization. We need your help. To fully make this vision a reality, we need volunteers who will contribute time and resources to help us continue to develop and disseminate these Debate Guides, provide outreach and training, and to help schools and communities fundraise and secure sponsors. We hope you will join us on this journey.



There is no debate. Debating can make the world a better place!

Patrick Lockhart

WELCOME

Dear Teacher, Parent, or Community Member

Debating is a great way to encourage your students to engage with exciting and interesting topics in the classroom and beyond. Learning to debate teaches students how to apply critical analysis and to prepare a supportable argument using sound research. It also teaches students valuable communication skills through public speaking and team cooperation.

> **"Like other competitive sports, debate teams make school more engaging and challenging. They give kids a reason to be excited about coming to school."**
> **- Arne Duncan**

If you are interested in introducing debating into your primary/elementary school classroom, then this concise how-to guide has been written just for you! You may be wondering, "Why should I teach debating in my classroom? I'm not sure I want to encourage more 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 able to argue well-enough already - constantly! 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 view-points and to critically evaluate information that is presented to them. Of course, that's completely different than encouraging argumentative interruptions in class.

Extensive research studies confirm that debate is a useful teaching tool – actually it's a whole toolbox! The components of debating can be applied across a range of curriculum areas and can help your students develop multiple high order skills. Debating exercises can be easily adapted and used for group work and for whole class activities.

This handbook is not intended to cover all the research and theories on debate in schools but aims instead to offer some practical guidance to any teacher looking for workable, proven ideas for introducing debate in their classroom.

We wish you and your students many productive, exciting and stimulating hours of challenge and learning through debate!



THE NEED FOR DEBATE

There is a serious need for debating and public speaking programs in the early grades. Given the demonstrated importance of verbal/cognitive capabilities 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 with other aspects of their curricular instruction. Debate provides foundational skills necessary for future success in school and throughout life.

Having these skills means that students are more likely to succeed in classes, particularly smaller and more challenging seminar-style and virtual online 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 from the primary grades through 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 together in an overall strategy. To be effective in debate, students must use a variety of component skills such as argument construction, evidence analysis, organization, outlining, persuasion, oral literacy, research skills, and teamwork. Although they may not utilize all of these skills in primary school, an introduction to debate early on in students' education will set the stage for further development and growth.

WHY TEACH DEBATE?

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.

"Studies of both competitive and classroom debate activities support the claim that participation leads to improvements in attainment, whether overall or in specific subjects. The evidence on classroom debate activities indicates there is a link with increased subject knowledge and achievement in science (biology), history, art and English as a foreign language. Using debate as a teaching tool can also deliver a greater depth of learning."

CfBT Education Trust

THE BENEFITS OF DEBATE

The core purpose of promoting debate in elementary 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 grade 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.

IMPROVED & DIVERSIFIED 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.

PROMOTES EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS

As former Secretary of Education Arne Duncan pointed out in a speech to the Urban League," In America, education is the great equalizer. And in our urban schools, competitive debate is one of the great equalizers of educational opportunity. Urban debate leagues help ensure that young people in the inner-city get the same exposure to academic rigor as young people in wealthy suburban schools."



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.

HOW TO USE DEBATE IN PRIMARY SCHOOL



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

The objective of this Guide is to provide an introduction to debate in a simple, practical way that will allow you to use it easily in your classroom. Initiating a debate program in your primary school classroom can be a great way to facilitate the strong, early development of public speaking skills, critical thinking & research skills, and the ability to work with peers toward a common goal.

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 who are advocates of opposing points of view and interpretations of facts. What we are dealing with here is the challenge of helping children learn to be resourceful thinkers who can synthesize ideas and quickly articulate them convincingly. If you think about it, this is one of the most basic, but important, lifetime skills that educators can offer students. Although you may be more familiar with formal, college level debate, debate does not need to be formal or overly sophisticated to be useful for students. Debate can serve equally well in the primary and middle-school classroom to facilitate research and discussion of a broad range of subjects not limited to the curriculum.

Formal debate often involves two teams of two or three people speaking in a specific order, but this is just one type of debate. However, the process is extremely variable and whatever works for your class is fine. Even simply giving a statement of opinion on an issue to your class and asking them to raise their hands if they agree or disagree can be a good starting point for introducing debate. You could use this 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.

GENERIC DEBATE FORMAT



An in-class debate can mirror a league tournament, or it can be more informal than that, depending on what works for your class. There are many ways to structure a classroom debate for elementary school students. There are some things, however, that all debate formats have in common:

- **The opening speaker always lays out what's called "resolution" in formal debate. Simple resolutions can spark heated debate in Primary grades.**

  Topics like "Dogs make better pets than cats" and "Kids should be able to dress any way they want" have broad appeal in younger groups. topics should be simple and familiar at first, throwing a wide net of interest.

- **There are two teams representing those in *favor of the resolution* (In Support or Affirmative) and *those against* (Opposition or Negative). Using the words "pro" and "con" may be more familiar to your primary school students.**

- **The "In Support/Affirmative" position always has the *burden to prove its side* (burden of proof). This is where facts and reasoning show their value.**

- **The debate closes with final *rebuttals on both sides* which summarize their respective positions and attempt to undercut the opposing positions.**

HOW A DEBATE RUNS

(Does not show breaks, cross-examination, or discussion.)

1st Affirmative	1st Negative	2nd Affirmative	2nd Negative	Neg Rebuttal Aff Rebuttal
Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	Introduction	No new arguments can be introduced.
Definitions	If necessary, attack definitions	Clash with points made by Negative and rebuild Affirmative case (proof)	Continue attack on Affirmative (proof)	Explain why your team should win and the other team should lose.
Explain why present system is bad and needs change (proof)	Clash with needs for change (proof)	Present plan, if not already presented (proof)		Remind the judges of your arguments.
At least introduce the plan or present all of plan (policy debate)	If necessary, present counterplan (policy debate)			Tell the judges why they should believe your arguments even after the other team's attack.
Present reason why	Clash with reasons Present counter-reasons			Explain why the judges should not listen to the other team. Review critical evidence.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO COVER IN NOTES

FIRST PROPOSITION CONSTRUCTIVE – 5 MINUTES

How well 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

How well speaker makes arguments against the proposition's case and refutes the proposition's major points.

SECOND PROPOSITION CONSTRUCTIVE – 5 MINUTES

How well speaker rebuilds and expands 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

How well speaker enhances 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

How well speaker pulls the arguments made in the debate together and explains why the opposition should win. This rebuttal should finalize the refutation of the proposition's major points.

PROPOSITION REBUTTAL – 3 MINUTES

How well speaker summarizes the issues discussed in the debate and explains why the proposition should win the debate. This rebuttal should refute the opposition's major points.



EARLY GRADE IDEAS

Grade school debating may sound like it's pretty crazy, but in our opinion debating at any age is a plus for students. Generally actual debating and debating teams or even semi-formal debating of any kind doesn't start until 6th or 7th Grades. We believe that any child can start learning the basics of debating in 1st grade.

It doesn't have to be serious, meaningful, it can be stupid, crazy, unorganized if it makes them think... "okay I got to say why my dog is better than her cat."

The basic approach is - debate fun things and involve the whole class.

You say "okay kids, let's discuss what make a better pet, dogs or cats?"

Have a show of hands and then take those two points of view and say

"There's a BIG difference of opinion - let's have a debate.!

On Monday, this side of class is going to debate on one side. Just for fun.

On Tuesday, have the other side of the class debate the other side.

As early as 2nd grade, have them debate a subject matter that they like and let them debate their opinion of why they think their view right. Here are some suggestions from experienced teachers that are sure to stir debate in your classroom:

Simple & Fun Topics for Younger Primary School Grades

1. Dogs are better than cats
2. School uniforms should be mandatory
3. School should be in session year-round
4. Zoos do more harm than good
5. Class participation shouldn't be graded
6. Disney movies are better than superhero movies
7. Playing video games does more harm than good
8. Homework should be banned
9. Students should be able to chew gum in school
10. Cell phones should be banned in school
11. Soccer is better than football
12. It's okay to keep something that you find
13. Students should have to learn a second language

FUN Debate Forums LEARNING

Fun Topics For Older Children Grades 4-6

1. Should there be a dress code at our school?
2. Should kids be allowed to dress however they like outside of school?
3. Should kids have a job such as mowing yards or baby-sitting if their grades are poor?
4. Should kids be allowed to buy whatever they want to with their own money or allowance?
5. Should kids be able to get any style of haircut they want?
6. Should kids be able to have a birthday party and invite any friends they want?
7. Should kids be allowed to go anywhere they want to with their friends?
8. When should kids be given an increase in the amount of their allowance?
9. Should young kids be permitted to go to a PG-13 movie with older friends?
10. At what age should kids be permitted to have or attend a sleep-over party?
11. When should kids be permitted to have a pet?
12. Should kids be permitted to join any online group they want?
13. What kind of chores should kids be required to help with around the house?
14. Should every kid have their own bedroom if possible?
15. Should kids have to dress up for special occasions that parents feel are important?
16. Should kids be allowed to take up any hobby that they want to?
17. Should kids be allowed to take learn to play any musical instrument they like?
18. Should kids be permitted to have a TV in their bedroom?
19. Should kids be allowed to have their body pierced? Which parts are OK?
20. Should kids be allowed to get a tattoo? What kinds of tattoos are OK?
21. Should kids be required to wear bicycle or skateboard helmets?
22. Should kids have homework assignments every night?
23. Should physical punishment be allowed at school? What kind would be OK?
24. Should kids have a curfew? If so, what time and on what days?
25. Should the school cafeteria offer fast food-style lunches instead of regular cafeteria food?
26. Should school hours be changed to 12:00 to 6:00 pm?
27. Should students be allowed to bring their pets to school?
28. Should kids under the age of ten be dropped off at the mall without adult supervision?
29. Should skateboards be allowed on sidewalks?

In 2nd and 3rd grade everyone who engages should be winning something and being acknowledged. The reward can be special treats, a trophy, stars on the classroom wall – whatever communicates positive reward for participation.

By 4th grade most kids are ready to debate opposite sides of many opinions with great vigor. That means the teacher can take any debate point that has popular support and say okay here's the deal, now you have to debate against that point. Tell your students to take any argument and tell you why it won't work or is wrong - that's when their cognitive juices will start to really kick in. Their goal will become winning the argument.

Class size doesn't have to be an obstacle to setting up a debate process that involves everyone. A class of 28 could have 14 two-person teams. It could have seven four-person teams. A class like this could generate and debate all kinds of issues they would eagerly brainstorm themselves – that makes learning fun, which as you know is one of the very best ways anyone can think of to teach young children.

CLASSIC ACTIVITY 1: 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.

CLASSIC ACTIVITY 2: JUST WHAT IS DEBATE?

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.

Your students will probably think of others. There are different kinds of resolutions, but a resolution is always the answer to a question.

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:

- *Lying is always morally wrong*
- *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:

- *Environmental laws should be stricter*
- *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.

DEBATING VALUE OR POLICY IS NOT SOMETHING YOUNG CHILDREN USUALLY LIKE TO DO

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



CLASSIC ACTIVITY 3: FISHBOWL STYLE DEBATE

A fishbowl debate is a fantastic way to get your entire young 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.

CLASSIC ACTIVITY 4: FIRST CLASSROOM DEBATE



During this exercise, we will be encouraging students to discuss a LIGHTLY 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 for which there are clearly two sides. Although debates can cover more complex issues with multiple sides and middle grounds, it is best to start simply. Be careful to pick a topic 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

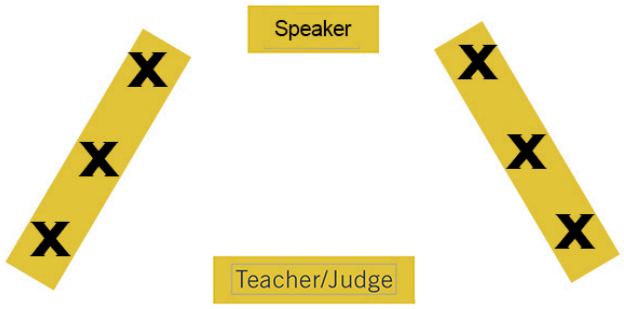
Have the students vote on whether they are opposed to or in favor of the resolution. After recording the vote, ask those in favor to each give a brief account of why they support the resolution. Then repeat this process with those students who oppose the resolution.

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

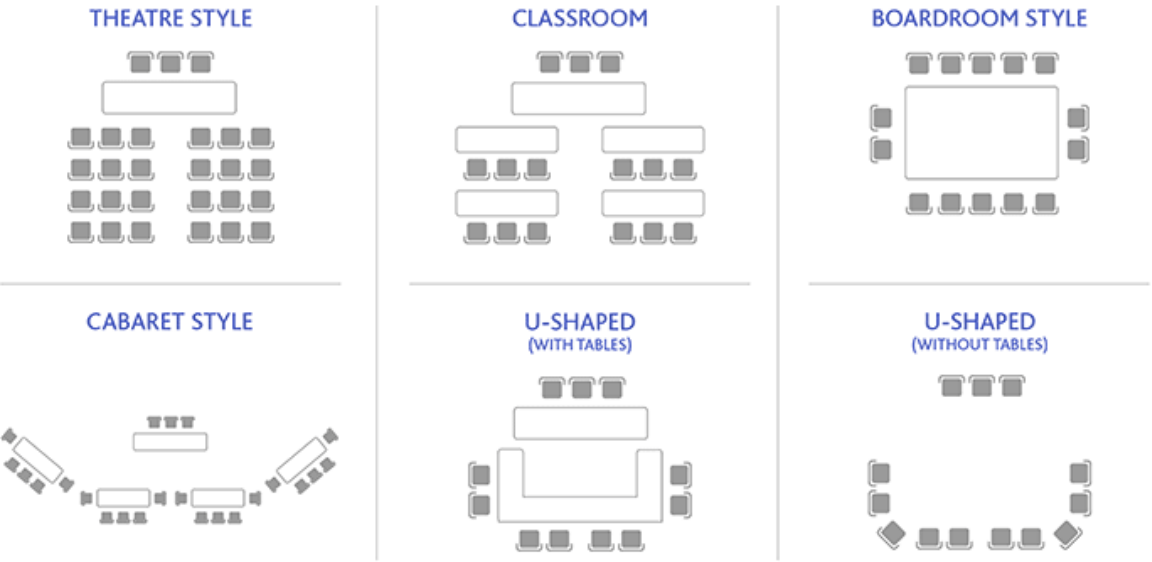
Conclude this unit by pointing out that the students have now taken part in an informal debate and that, over the next few classes, they will be learning some more formal debate skills.

Layout For A Small Classroom Debate

The Speaker has access to the board as well as any electronic devices to assist in their presentation.



Additional Room Setup Styles



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.



ADVANCED ACTIVITIES WORKING WITH THE DEBATE CONCEPT

OBJECTIVES

- Observe a live or videotaped debate.
- Take part in an informational debate
- Meet other kids who debate

In the Resource Section you'll find lots of video resources you can watch with your students showing kids just like them having fun and learning.

You may wish to arrange for a demonstration debate, either live or online, with a class at the same grade level as yours that's already doing debate.

You may wish to have the students take part in some informal debates with more experienced but not older debaters.

The idea is to expose your students to debate as its experienced by others – they'll see immediately how fun and interesting it will be for them too.



WHILE WATCHING DEBATE VIDEOS

DISCUSS WITH THE KIDS WHAT YOU DO NOT SEE:

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 but younger kids will need to know that's not going to happen to them.

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.

***Check out our curated list of links to great debate videos in the Resource Section.**

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 may 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. NEGATIVE	JUDGING (3 PEOPLE)	CHAIRING & TIMING
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 student 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.

The teacher/judge should:

Try to evaluate the debate based on the arguments and the refutation only, while taking into account the level of effort.

These preliminary debates should be short. It should be possible to get through the two rounds in one class.

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

It is helpful when introducing any format 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.

A 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 performance of the Affirmative Constructive go here.	Your notes about the negative's attacks on the affirmative case are written here.	Your notes about the affirmative's rebuttal to the negative's attacks go here.	Your notes about the Negative's response to the affirmative's rebuttal go 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 your notes about the negative case.	Your notes about the affirmative's attacks on the negative's case go here.	Your notes about thenegative's responses to the affirmative's attacks go here. Any final points of summary can also be recorded here	

STUDENTS CAN USE FLOWSHEETS LIKE THESE TO STAY ORGANIZED WHILE FOLLOWING DEBATES.

It can be useful to draw arrows between the columns in order to connect points made by the debaters in each section.

BUILDING ARGUMENTS

The essential parts of building an argument are assertion, reasoning, and evidence. An easy way to remember these components is the abbreviation A.R.E.

Assertion
Reasoning
Evidence

The **Assertion** is a claim made about the world or a statement of position. Statements like, "homework should be banned," or, "french fries are vegetables" 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:	Cats make better pets than dogs	Schools don't need a dress code
Reasoning:	Cats cost less to take care of	Not everybody can afford to dress that way
Evidence:	Data on costs of veterinary care	Income data; cost of uniforms

WHEN REASONING GOES BAD: LOGICAL FALLACIES

To be successful debaters, students will need to learn the difference between good argumentation and bad argumentation.

Debate is a great way for students to learn that 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, and once they learn how to spot them young students can really zero in!. 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. Any examples?

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. Any examples?

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. Any examples?

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 the entire class is great at art. Any examples?

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 the Jones family down the street has two children and a half child. Any examples?

MANAGING THE DISCUSSION PERIOD

OBJECTIVES

To acquaint students with the nature of the discussion period in a debate.

APPROACH

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. (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 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.

TEAMWORK
Debate Forums
COOPERATION

THE DEBATE FOUNDATION: SUPPORT AND SUSTAINABILITY



THE FUN PART - MAKING IT HAPPEN

Every school debate team deserves to have full parental and community support, including volunteers and financial support. Some schools need more help than others. It depends on the need and how far you feel you can go to help.

In grade school, the financial requirement in support of in-class debate activities is very, very low. Later in 6th, 7th and 8th grade, you may do some in-school debating so you may need to raise a little bit more money. We think most schools would need no more than $1000 dollars for in-school debating, unless you're going to pay for a coach, but generally one of the teachers will want to become the coach, and if the school has the budget maybe pay them something additional.

A single dedicated teacher is likely going to have to start this, with all the help they can get from others, and help put a team together. The bigger and stronger the team that can get together behind the teacher, the more successful the program will be and the more fun it will be. If you create a grade school foundation – it doesn't have to be a formal 'foundation' for you to call it a 'school debate foundation'. Let's say that you can put together 10-12 people, they can be parents, alumni, teachers, maybe even a couple of local businesses that really support and like debating. You need to get people that are motivated to be involved, not reluctant volunteers. Put out a flyer asking for support and participation. Have everyone involved post it on their social media pages and ask their friends to share the excitement of forming a school debate team! If you get way more people than you need – great! Be prepared to recycle those people and give them something to do, because the more people in the community that support your program, the better.

The school debating foundation – the group of supporters – can be a big help help to teachers. In getting the tasks accomplished that are needed for a successful debate program. They can come to class and put on a mock minidebate, showing the class how debating works. There are so many ways that this can work for the teacher in a grade school. You can introduce debate in maybe 2nd or 3rd grade. You could do it in 1st grade, but I'm going to leave that up to the school and the teachers because they will be the driving force behind this. The students will be the main beneficiaries, but the teachers will also benefit. The more funding you have the better and you're going to use that money for trophies in the lower grades, and to travel to debate other schools in higher grades.

FUNDRAISING & SPONSORSHIPS

For grade schools there are a lot of easy traditional ways to raise money...

There are a lot of traditional things that are fun and that still work although they've been done forever. We'll talk about some other fun stuff in a minute. But go ahead and do a bake sale. Do a cookie sale. Have the students help their parents make the products, maybe add a competition to it with prize ribbons then sell the products.

Clipping box tops from cereals and snacks at 5-10 cents each, along with dozens of other packaged things that families buy can add up fast if you can get all the Debate team families and supporters involved. One program that seems to be very popular is http://www.boxtops4education.com/

Have a luncheon. Have a luncheon during the school day with something special brought by different parents. Have the parents come to see the debating at the luncheon, show them what the debating team does, have them do a short 10-15-minute debate on some subject matter that would be pertinent to the times or to a situation at the school.

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 a gift card program such as RaiseRight. Families and supporters buy gift cards at face value for places they already shop – grocery stores, restaurants, gas stations and online stores – and the brands pay a percentage of every card back to your school's debate team. It doesn't cost your supporters one extra penny!

Your team members have parents and grandparents who buy groceries and gas every week, and I'll bet very few of them have ever been asked to make those purchases with gift cards that support a good cause. Also - your school already has business supporters in the community whose businesses buy large amounts of supplies all the time – and it won't cost them one penny to pay with gift cards that earn money for your School's Debate Team. For example, law firms buy office supplies every month and every law firm in your town will want to be supporting your debate if you just ask. So simply sign your school up for free at https://www.raiseright.com/ 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 their gift card purchases.

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 extra dollars, they should jump at the chance. However, even in big cities, businesses and professionals in the school's neighborhood are buying supplies every week and should be approached too.

Another easy idea: create an Amazon Wish List of what your team needs – timers, books, trophies – and share the link with parents and supporters so they can buy items directly for the team. Wish lists are free to set up and easy to update as your needs change. (Amazon closed its AmazonSmile program in 2023.) To learn more about gift card fundraising, go to https://www.raiseright.com/

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 grade 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 they're 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 tire 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 grade 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 differently in every town.

We do not believe in asking for any money from the school system to support debating, because their budgets are tightly allocated already.

The teachers, parents and even the students should raise the funds needed and control how they are budgeted. The less politics involved in any debate team program the better.

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.

I 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. I 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. We don't believe in winners and losers; we believe in winners and learners.

Part of the not winning is learning and learning why you lost makes people try harder the next time. That's the philosophy of World Debating Forum because if there's a benefit to being nice to people, doing the right thing and not having any hate in your heart, those benefits are on open display in a debating forum.

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, 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.

"I think blue is in black." "No way – you're wrong.". OK – "Prove it. Give me some facts."

"Since you ask, here are some simple facts. First, white is a mix of every color. Black is not a color. Black is the absence of every color. A color cannot be part of black, by definition."

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 volunteers come in to show kids how to write memos of thanks to the foundation that say 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.

That's what I would do for grade school. I wouldn't make it too complicated, you know, bake sales, and tag into whatever else you're doing out there that raises money. Just be part of it for the debating team. A big deal is sustainability and in order to do that, you've got to have backup to all the positions that are needed. Make sure that if somebody…if the top person drops out, nothing slows down. It won't be the same. It' sometimes will take time be as good, but it might get better with the next person over time.

Athletics & Debate

Debate has very strong and lasting educational value in both curricular and extracurricular activities. The most obvious benefit is the opportunity that debate provides diverse opportunities to develop and practice cognitive/verbal skills. These skills are extremely important to academic and personal development as well as to success in almost any field in life, yet few curriculum materials are available to support the teacher in fostering them.

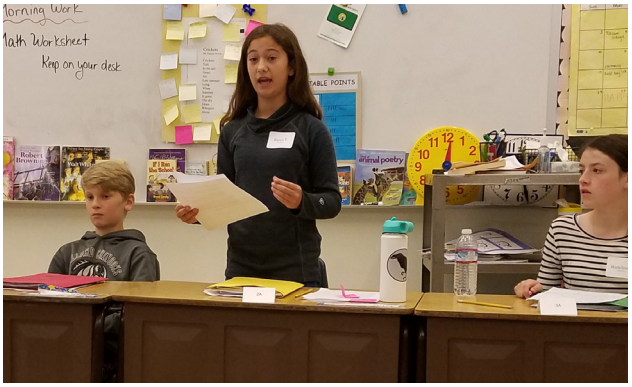
What makes debate especially valuable for fostering development of verbal/cognitive skills is that it is not only structured, but also interactive. Debate requires that participants listen, think and respond. It is not enough for the debater to simply memorize and perform a speech. Instead, debaters must listen to their opponents, engage in a questioning process, and incorporate this information into their own presentations.

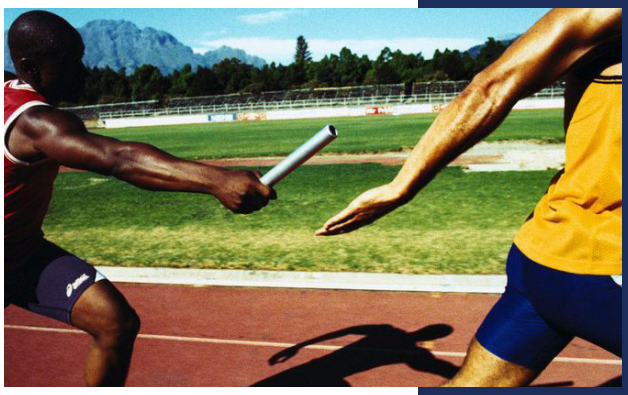
Debate is also an excellent way to develop critical thinking skills. The process of researching a debate is one of examining the pros and cons of an issue, determining what the problems are and considering alternative solutions. The research and presentation of a debate is clearly a team effort, and participation in activities like debate explicitly develops the skills needed to work in teams.

Debate can also be used to explore issues in a variety of areas including social studies, economics, history, and more. For example, one could have a debate on whether human aggression is innate or learned. Whether or not a debate topic is related to a class curriculum, debate has a lot to offer participants.

I would like to offer an observation that I've made many times – that Debate not only gives children so many of the same developmental benefits as sports but that the two are highly complementary. I can't think of a single reason why an athletic coach wouldn't want their students to join the school debate club, nor can I think of any reason why kids who excel in debate wouldn't find those same skills working for them in whatever sport or recreational activity that enjoy. The following graphic illustrates some of the complementary benefits that children gain from participation in each of these core developmental activities.

Sports & Debate: Natural Synergy





	Debate	Sports
Self-Confidence	X	X
Teamwork	X	X
Communication	X	X
Leadership	X	X
Sportsmanship	X	X
Research & Analysis	X	X
Time Management	X	X
Performance Under Pressure	X	X
Planning & Execution	X	X
Strategic/Tactical Thinking	X	X
Emotional Maturity	X	X

Debate Research Links

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Shuster, C. (2008). *Not Making the Case: A Critical Examination of Research Supporting Urban Debate Leagues.* https://debate.uvm.edu/dcpdf/ESU-Summary_debatingtheevidence.pdf

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Williams, D., McGee, B. and Worth, D. (2001). *University student perceptions of the efficacy of debate participation: an empirical investigation. Argumentation and Advocacy,* 37: 198–209. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00028533.2001.11951670

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."

Transform Teaching and Learning through Talk
https://www.amazon.com/Transform-Teaching-Learning-through-Talk/dp/1475840683/
"blends the academic research and evidence, with first-hand classroom experiences and practical strategies to enable you to unlock the power of oracy in your classroom and equip your students with the speaking skills they need to thrive in the twenty first century."

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

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/video-type/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

"Train For Any Argument": Bo Seo, two-time world debating champion and former Harvard debate coach, explains how to argue well – and why good disagreement matters in school and in life.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WjUFuW2J0A

"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=-MWkN9iIo6I&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=mIorefP3i60&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/video-type/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 practical teacher's guide to running a class debate, step by step (free video)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KCDePzmP-B8

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

Bo Seo, two-time world debating champion and former Harvard debate coach, explains how to argue well – and why good disagreement matters
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WjUFuW2J0A

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/
michael_sandel_the_lost_art_of_democratic_debate

"How To Disagree Productively And Find Common Ground" Julia Dahr
https://www.ted.com/talks/
julia_dhar_how_to_disagree_productively_and_find_common_ground

World Debating Forum.com

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 flearn to ormulate 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.

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.

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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 debate 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.

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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 knowledgably 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?.

World Debating Forum.com

Resources

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

Online Debating Resources

A very interesting online debating website
https://www.createdebate.com/

Research on online debating as a learning environment
http://t4.tc.columbia.edu/faculty/dk100/faculty-profile/files/gaugumentskillsinacomputersupportedenvironment.pdf

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/

Famous Debaters

No Arguing With Success

Research has been confirming for decades that participation in debate in school leads directly to greater success in life. Fortunately, we have more than just research that proves this – there are hundreds of examples from "real life".

While you could look through the lineup of any top law firm and find dozens of high-paid lawyers who were debate team stars in school, it might not occur to you to look through Hollywood or the Pentagon for similar histories – but they would be there!

In fact, since cognitive skills are critical to success in almost every profession we're confident that the top levels of every profession are disproportionately filled with those whose quick and alert minds were forged in debate.

Here are just a few of the prominent people who credit debate with a large part of their success in life.

Oprah Winfrey – TV Star, Author, Philanthropist
Nelson Mandela – South African Nobel Peace Prize Winner
Ann Richards: Author, former governor of Texas
Antonin Scalia, Supreme Court Justice.
Arianna Huffington: Publisher, media innovator, TV commentator
Barbara Jordan: prominent U.S. Congresswomen
Malcolm X – Civil Rights leader, Author
James Earl Jones – Actor, Author, Poet
Aristotle – Western Civilization Thought Influencer

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 Daniel Krieger, a very talented ESL teacher in Japan. We hope that it offers you 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=PaE472sOvZ0

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 debeters disagree with each other.
- **The Judge(s)** decide the winner based on the best presentation and evidence.

You can watch this 4-minute video as a class to review these terms
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yi6Im-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 to 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.
- It can trigger asthmatic attacks in others

- 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 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".
- 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=5WOJItHYwlM

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.

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 use 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:

"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 sttement 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.

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.

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.

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 from 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.

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=38zHoAP-_BQ

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=TQvwWoWxKxw

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

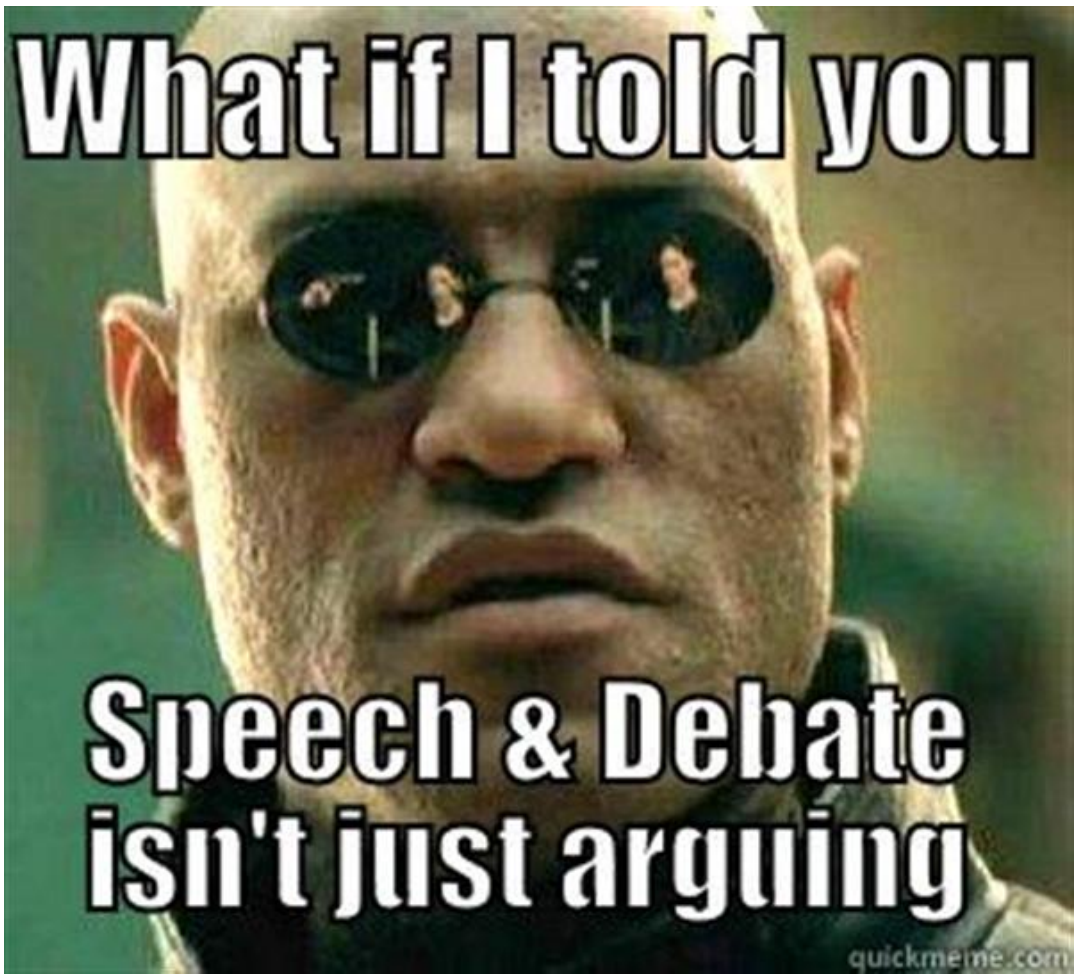
4. Final Practice

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

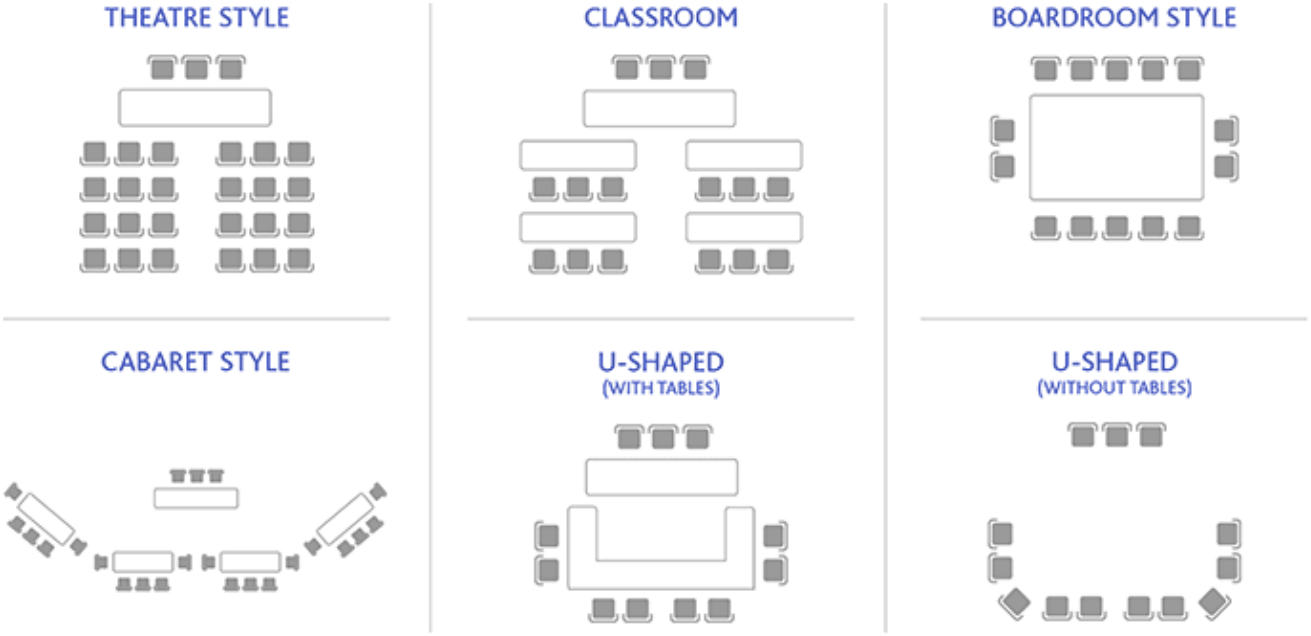
The Devil's Advocate

- 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 tlike these can provoke vigorous discussion - be sure to review the
- rules regarding respectful evidence-based disagreement:

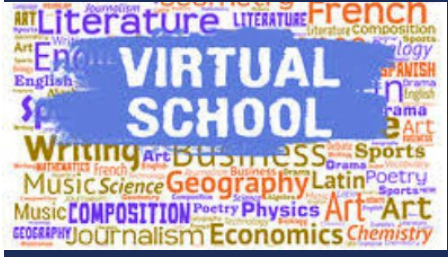
1. All citizens who do not vote should have to pay a fine
2. Video games containing violence should be banned
3. Women should stop working when they get married and have babies
4. Anyone who insults a person's religion should be punished
5. No one should be allowed to criticize the government
6. Art 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.



This entire section is adapted from an original 2005 work: **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. If not you can join now by clicking here.

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.

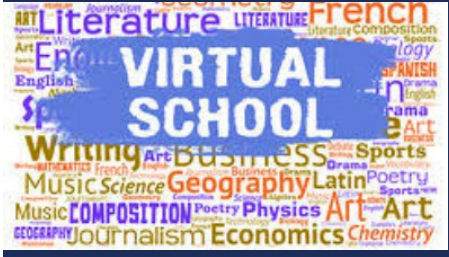
The ancient teaching method of Debate has suddenly charged to the front of contemporary virtual education, largely because it is remarkably well-adapted to online learning and social interaction. By providing universally accepted and understood structures, processes, rules and boundaries for evidence-based 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 fo generates and supports, offers great hope."



World Debating Forum.com



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.

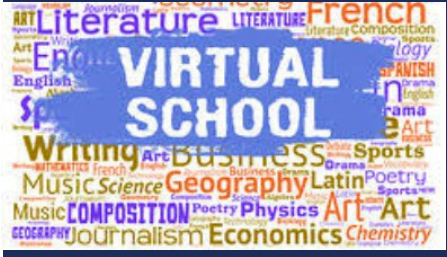
We think teachers and schools need to involve students directly in making technology choices. Chances are that it will the students who teach the adults how to set up and run the systems that will support online debating. Everybody is learning from everybody else in the virtual interaction realm.

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.teachingeslonline.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.

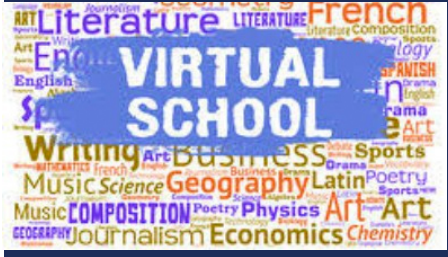
Don't be afraid to take your tech people and sit them down and say I think we should do this, and here's what I propose – what do you think? Ideally they will see your point, accept your proposal and say "Yeah, well we can do all three of those things if we go here, change this, and bring in that." This 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 thelikes 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 aredoing 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 usingZoom, 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

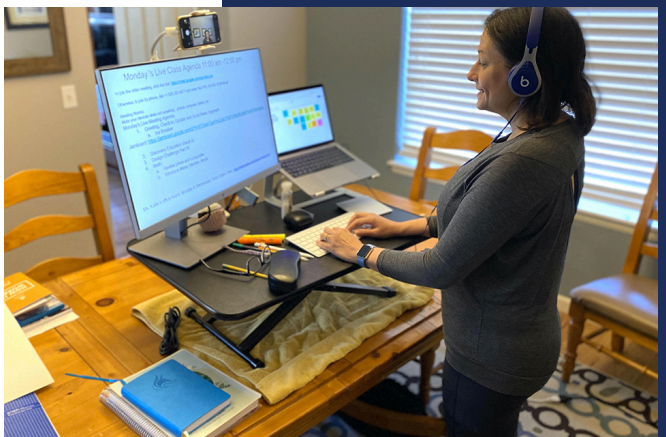
It does that almost without being noticed because it creates a structure and discipline in the background of the interaction between students who are debating that is absent in most in-class and virtual teaching, discussions, meetings, or conferences. Debate imposed a mutually-agreed discipline on all 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!

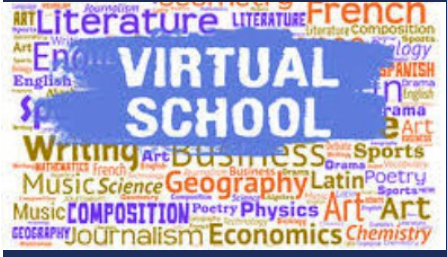
The structure of debate means that all students will have an equal amount of time to speak; kids who tend to talk too much won't be able to, and those who tend to stay quiet in a "normal" class will be able to speak. More importantly, in the organized rules-based format of debate, a student who is a 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:





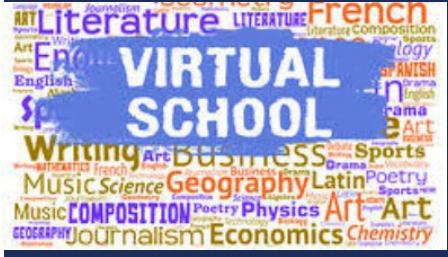
"Instructions for the debate are written in a way that encourages cooperative conversation geared toward increased understanding, and discourages purely competitive styles of conversation that ignore the importance of listening, of subtlety, and concern for the collective educational good. I also use 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.

I"n 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.

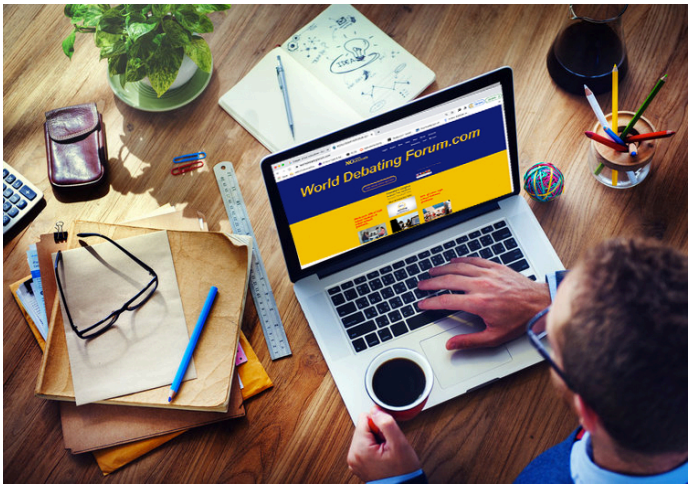


VIRTUAL DEBATE & ESL

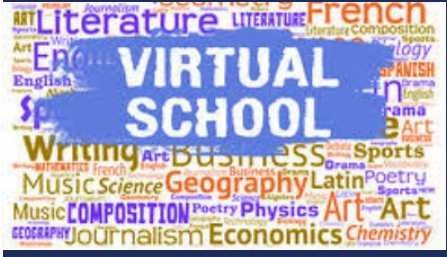
Virtual learning has many challenges and unfortunately many of these are only showing up under today's difficult conditions. One of the most difficult online learning challenges is when a student's first language is different from the first language of their online school community, and especially from that of the teacher. Our own experience, and widely published research, convinces us that kids (and adults) learn a second language best when they can move seamlessly back and forth between hearing, seeing and speaking both languages at the same time, and the virtual environment of World Debating Forum is specifically designed to help this happen.

Also important for kids who are learning English as their second language, whose natural learning styles vary widely, our virtual debate system offers several unique paths to English – learning.

First, using the YouTube closed – captioning system students how to speak, write and read English better as part of interacting with the content, and without any special language – learning effort on their part. English words, phrases, and pronunciations are simply absorbed as students listen in English and see the closed captions in their first language. The same principle works in reverse – a native speaker English student who wants to learn Spanish can absorb an amazing amount simply from watching English – language videos with Spanish closed captions. Hundreds of our curated English and Spanish videos are set up to use the 50+ languages in YouTube Closed Caption format.



Second, ESL students participating in WDF Virtual In – Class Debating have more, better opportunities to use and practice their language skills through one – on – one virtual interaction with the other debaters. In a physical ESL class it is difficult for teachers to help the shy kids speak and keep the verbal ones quieted down without damaging their enthusiasm. In Virtual In – Class debating everyone has their turn to speak, and everyone knows that each English speaker is doing their best so the 'stage fright' element practically disappears. A student who might freeze speaking English in front of their physical class could actually be eager to come to their Virtual In – Class Debate with a prepared argument for their 3 minute segment. That's because this 2 – 3 minutes is their chance to share their own ideas in English, but from the privacy of their own home



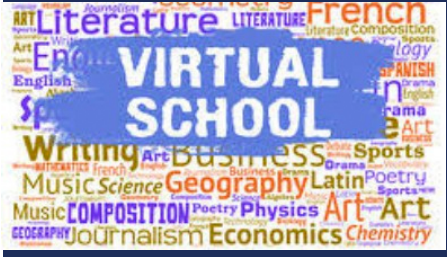
space rather than being physically in front of the class. And to be frank, it's a lot harder for negative social interaction to occur in a Virtual debating space, like intimidating glances or little laughs that might inhibit a kid speaking in front of physical class. Because of the structure of debate, 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 old standard classroom model where the teacher dumped information and the kids processed and regurgitated it. But there are a lot of new 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.

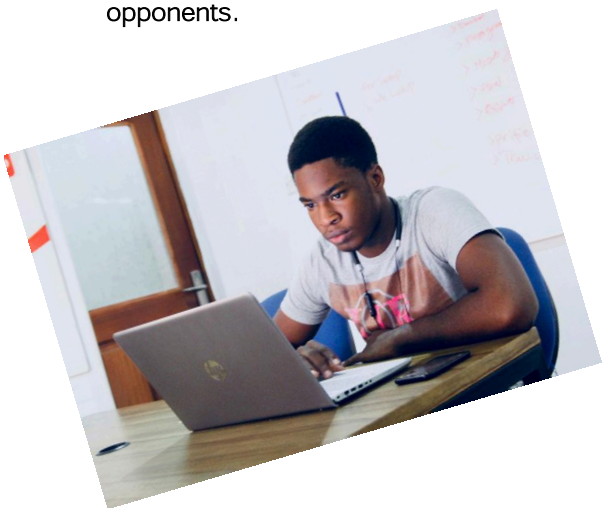


With In-Class Virtual debate all that boredom and useless busywork disappears and the kids love learning. Virtual debate also gives students with verbal, social, and auditory learning styles an opportunity to engage with each other by working with subject content in a way that is comfortable for them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

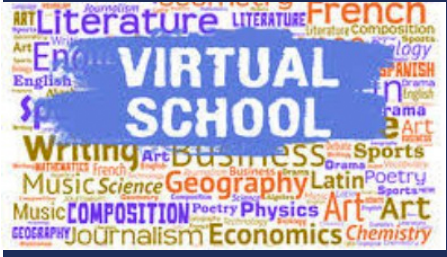
In a physical classroom the library is down the hall or, if you're lucky, you're allowed to use your phone to do research. But you're still sitting in physical space along with others, reaching out from a central point for information, probably talking with each other but otherwise not interacting. In 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.







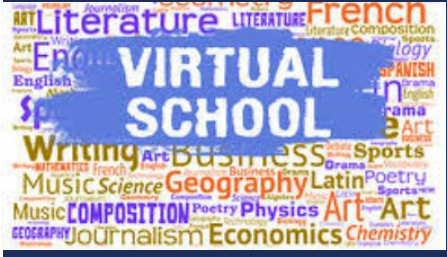
They want to go out there armed with their favorite search engine and find the killer argument, the deadly fact, and then to be able to spring at just the right moment. And they they'll spend time thinking about how best to use this great little piece of info they've just found to destroy the opposing 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.

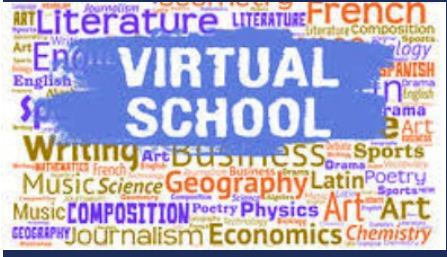
Please see our book on raising funds for your debate team/class to support this kind of technology

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.

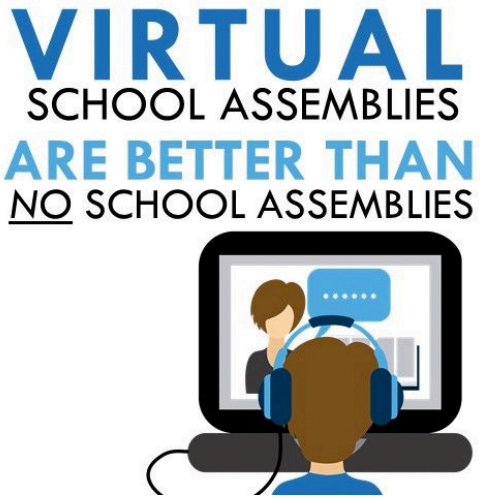
Kids do homework to fill in the gaps in what the teacher wasn't able to cover; kids prepare for in-class debate because they are teaching themselves and filling in the gaps for each other.

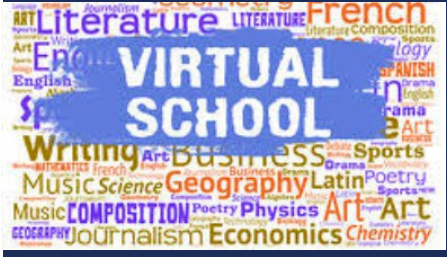
That's why at 8 AM in an in-class debating school the day starts with energy and excitement - we're going to win the biology debate at 11am and ace the history debate at 2pm! So the teacher's job at the beginning of the virtual school day will be more a matter of channeling live-wire energy rather than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





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.

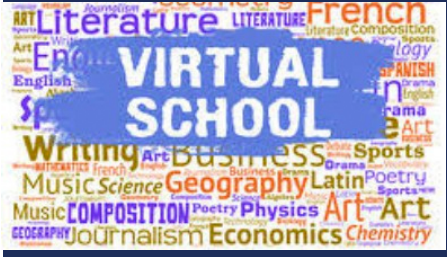
And so it would go – this Virtual Assembly. Who knows – maybe even with a Pledge of Allegiance. Optional of course, and in Virtual Space.

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

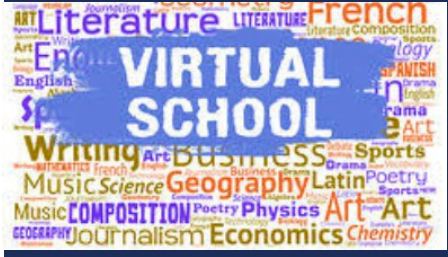
And in our in-class debating system we say you don't have any traditional "assigned" homework. Why? Because in preparing for in-class debate the students actually assign the work, not the 'homework', to themselves because they know they've got to put in a very big five minutes of presentation and argument 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/

https://moodle.org/

https://www.schoology.com/

Research Validation Of In-Class Debate As A Superior Educational Tool

There is a strong body of published research that supports an equally strong body of lived classroom experience that establishes that in-class, across-the-curriculum (IC-ATC) debating is a superior teaching tool. This fact is being demonstrated in classrooms and schools around the world.

Some countries, like Italy and Finland, have actually adopted IC-ATC debate as a nation-wide teaching method, and the results in academic performance and student self-confidence and communications skills are uniformly indisputably superior. In inner-city Boston, New York and Atlanta schools where IC-ATC debate programs are running successfully, kids are doubling their GPA scores, cutting dropout rates to the bone, dramatically increasing college admissions, and increasing their optimism and self-confidence.



In-Class, Across-The-Curriculum Debate is proving to be THE turnaround factor in many under-performing, under-resourced schools. Implementing these programs is a straightforward, non-disruptive process that measurably increases student academic performance while also measurably reducing student homework and teacher workload.

For some reason there was a large amount of research published on IC-ATC Debate in the 1980s and 1990s but it almost disappeared after 2000, only to begin re-appearing in roughly 2015, perhaps coinciding with the rise of the technology-enabled classroom. Whatever the reason for the gap in research, during this entire period IC-ATC Debate has been progressively re-discovered and implemented around much of the world, but in the US it remains well under the radar of most school districts even as they struggle with student academic performance, student attendance issues and dropout rates, teacher burnout and now the need to invent virtual classrooms on the fly. We see a central role for In-Class, Across-The-Curriculum Debate in addressing all of these critical issues, leading to a new, more student-centered model for learning and high achievement.

The following excerpts from key research in this emerging field will give you a sense of how well-documented this relatively simple teaching approach is and how accessible it is right now for any class, any teacher, any school.

RESEARCH LITERATURE REVIEWS

Students' perceptions of debating as a learning strategy: A qualitative study

https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1471595318310540

*"Debate has been shown to **develop critical thinking** skills, **enhance communication**, and **encourage teamwork** in a range of different disciplines, including nursing. Three main themes described the students' perceptions of the debate. These were: (1) **openness to diverse viewpoints**; (2) **developing non-technical skills,** and (3) **encouraging deep learning**. Analysis showed that participants perceived debate to be a valuable educational method that enhanced their learning. Engaging in debate encouraged students to critically reflect on their prior beliefs about organ donation—in some cases leading them to reconsider their original position.*

*The findings from this study suggest that **debate can be a valuable pedagogical tool t**o incorporate into healthcare education. Future research should consider the use of debate to develop non-technical skills that have utility in healthcare."*



Debating the Issues: A Tool for Augmenting Critical Thinking Skills of Marketing Students

https://doi.org/10.1177/0273475305280533

*"This study makes the case for **enhancing critical thinking** as an integral part of the marketing curriculum t**hrough the debate process**. Linkages thinking, debate, and the marketing curricula are examined in the desired student outcomes and learning skills. The role of the planning and facilitating the debate is discussed in some detail. We are **how to adapt formal debate procedures and formats** to the marketing curriculum."*

Developing Critical Interaction Skills in Students: Debating Clinical Pharmacokinetic Controversies



web.archive.org/web/2014/archive.ajpe.org/legacy/pdfs/aj5804440.pdf

*"The results of the evaluation showed that **students gained confidence** in their ability to discuss therapeutic controversies with others. Use of clinically-oriented issues pattern **"real life" problems** and seems to be useful."*
*"Two aspects of problem-based learning that are incorporated into a course when using this technique are (1) **"problem-centered" rather than subject-centered" learning** and (2) **"student-centered" rather than "teacher-centered" learning."***

Debating to Learn across the Curriculum: Implementation and Assessment

https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED327092

"The paper discusses the need for training in critical thinking and the effects of debate training across the curriculum as a teaching tool and learning mechanism. The debate training provided through the Oral Communication Program at Virginia's Radford University is described (design, implementation, results), along with data from a report on the opinions of students (N=1,814) in six areas of non-speech courses that utilized debate as a learning tool.

*Results indicate that such training offers **potential benefits for both curricular development and improved student oral communication skills**. Recommendations for incorporating debating teaching methods across the curriculum as an aid to learning are provided."*

"This encouraged the team to investigate the phenomenon by gathering both quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the value, the organization and the contribution of individuals in each case. The extent and the nature of the generally positive responses are reported in the paper before a discussion reflecting on what the comparison of "think, pair, share" with "team activities" reveals for future courses.

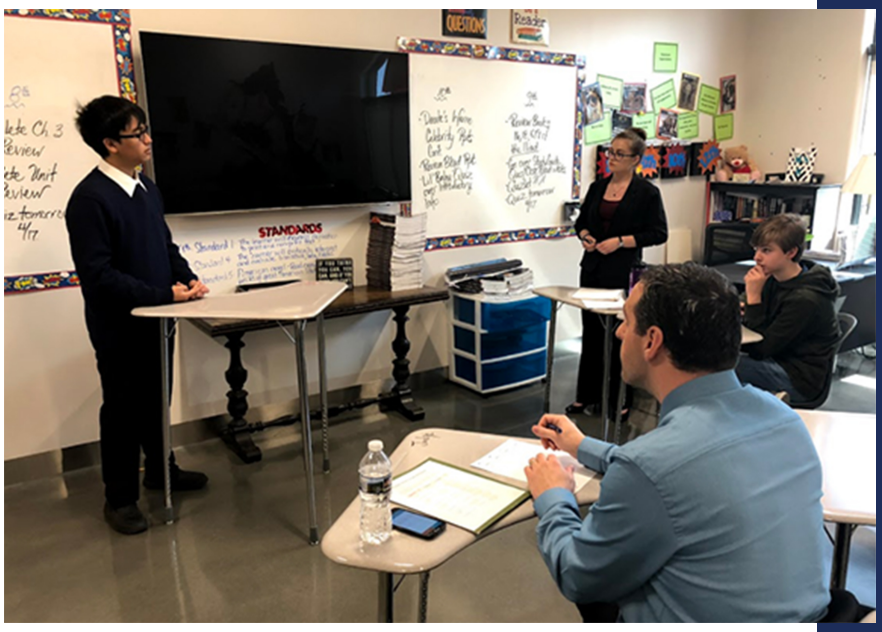
The conclusion is drawn that the ***study underscores confidence that group work can be very effective in such bilingual, content-based courses*** *in China and elsewhere."*



Using structured debate to achieve autonomous student discussion
https://www.jstor.org/stable/1555673?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents

*"Good historical pedagogy means having students take more responsible control over their own learning.One way to do this is to tum over classroom discussion entirely to students. In my experience, o****nce students realize you really mean to entrust leadership to them, even if temporarily, they tend to rise to the challenge****. However, the instructor also needs to provide enough structure in advance so that students do not feel rudderless."*

Debating practice to support critical thinking skills: Debaters' perception
http://jurnal.fkip.unila.ac.id/index.php/aksara/article/view/19859



English debate is an attractive activity for students where they can ***practice English and communication skills, also could strengthen critical thinking*** *through the activities. However, the activity is rarely implemented in Indonesian curriculum even though they've started implementing High Order Thinking Skill (HOTS) in their learning material. To fill this void, this study aims at exploring the debater's perception who had experience debate activity for years. Debate activity is mostly found in co-curriculum activity where it is not obligatory for students.*

Debating And Public Speaking Training For Pre-Service Teachers: Experiences And Advantages
http://lib.uib.kz/edulearn19/files/papers/542.pdf

"Since rhetoric, public speaking and debating are often not an integral part of our national curricula, few teachers in training have prior formal experience or training in public speaking and debating. The research on using debate and PS as a pedagogical tool to promote learning is scarce.

"Debate and prepared speeches can help students gain broad, multi-faceted knowledge across several disciplines, increase students' self-efficacy and self-confidence, provide the students with an engaging, active, and learner-centered activity, encourage team collaboration. The research question was: In what ways training in debate and public speaking helped preservice teachers?

"Method: Over twenty students completed an online open-ended questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of a course in public speaking and debating. Results: Students believed that the course could enhance their confidence speaking in front of groups, improve their teaching and professional communications skills, and in turn enhance their future pupils' learning.

Debating: a catalyst to enhance learning skills and competencies

https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/ET-10-2011-0097/full/html

*"This research found that l**earning through debates was statistically significant for developing both key graduate capabilities skills such as critical thinking and communication, and the processes that facilitate learning including (1) increased student motivation, (2) enhanced response to intellectual challenges and (3) a desire for learning in depth."***



A Debating Activity In EFL Classes

https://elibrary.ru/item.asp?id=41866854

"The article touches upon debating in EFL classes as a must-to-be method in preparing specialists capable to analyze, give arguments, make conclusions, take decisions, take an active position in expressing their own points of view, skillfully use knowledge not only from the sphere of their specialty but also from other fields to be competitive in the globalizing world. While debating in English, students have to think, present arguments, answer the questions of their opponents in a non-native language.

Debates in English lessons are considered as a method that must be used in foreign language classes to train specialists who are able to analyze, put forward arguments, draw conclusions, make decisions, defend their point of view, skillfully use not only professional knowledge, but also knowledge from others areas to be competitive in the era of globalization. It has been established that while participating in debates, students have to think, present arguments, answer the questions of opponents in a language that is not native to themselves. The positive impact of debates in English on the development of critical thinking, communication and oratory skills of students is described. The author's debate format, tested in foreign language classes, its structure and evaluation criteria are presented."



CASE STUDY Analysis of classroom debating strategies in the field of biotechnology

https://doi.org/10.1080/00219266.2002.9655839

"Biotechnology applications are used in many different fields, from the chemicals industry to agriculture and from medical diagnoses to the pharmaceuticals and environmental sectors, and their repercussions are the subject of much debate. ***Argumentation is a key to the build-up of knowledge and is a crucial aspect of democratic scientific education.*** *The issue for educationalists is how to develop argumentation skills among students, to enable them to participate in debates as citizens. One of the main concerns is to enable students to identify and determine the validity of their emotional standpoints and of the arguments used by scientists, influencers, teachers, other students and themselves."*



In-Class Debates: Fertile Ground for Active Learning and the Cultivation of Critical Thinking and Oral Communication Skills

https://isetl.org/ijtlhe/ijtlhe-article-view.php?mid=200

*"Debate as an active instructional strategy enhances learning particularly in the areas of mastering the content as well as developing c**ritical thinking skills, oral communication skills, and empathy.** Participation in a debate requires a more thorough mastery of the content than even giving a lecture does (Lewin & Wakefield, 1983). Yet debates go beyond mastery of the content as students also develop critical thinking skills, such as recognizing inconsistencies and identifying assumptions. The students can apply these skills in many different situations.*

*Similarly, debates demand the development of oral communication skills, which are vital for success in most careers. Most undergraduates take only one course in oral communication; therefore, instructors in various disciplines must imbed oral communication exercises in their courses. Debates also provide opportunities for developing empathy as students give consideration to various viewpoints, particularly when instructors structure the debate in such a manner that more than two views can be presented and that students are not always defending their own viewpoint. **Debating is the ultimate multi-task school activity since it involves research, writing, speaking, listening, and teamwork."***

ARE YOU AS EXCITED AS WE ARE ABOUT THE POTENTIAL FOR DEBATE BEING A GENTLE REVOLUTION IN CLASSROOM AND VIRTUAL EDUCATION?

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