

TEAM DEBATES: An exercise in developing arguments.

Purpose: The purpose of the activity is to continue to reinforce and continue to develop the following knowledge and skills sets:

- Arguments use reason and evidence to convey a perspective, point of view, or some version of the truth that is stated or implied in the thesis/ and or conclusion.
- Arguments are supported and unified by carefully chose and connected claims, reasons, and evidence.
- An argument may acknowledge other arguments and or respond to them with counterarguments.
- The line of reasoning is a clear, logical sequential path leading the audience through the reasons toward the conclusion.

DEBATE PROCEDURE

The debate format will be as follows. We will have two teams, one presenting an argument for a position stated in a GIVEN STATEMENT and one arguing against it. Each team will be given three minutes for an initial presentation, an additional 5 minutes for substantiating the argument, and a final 3 minutes to present a rebuttal of the other team's argument.

Each STATEMENT will be debated by a panel of six students: three "AFFIRMATIVE" and three "NEGATIVE." Each team should begin by assigning a primary responsibility to three team members, as follows:

1. PRESENT ARGUMENT

The debate will begin with each side giving a three-minute presentation that summarizes the team's position. One team member will deliver this statement for his or her team by bringing up, point by point, each of the claims that comprise the team's argument. While it will be one person's responsibility to deliver the argument, it is up to the whole team to define the main points.

As a team, begin by preparing a written outline of these points. This outline may be used by the presenter, but the statement should be delivered in a conversational manner, rather than as a scripted reading.

2. PROVIDE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ARGUMENT

This is the substantive part of the argument. Each team on the panel will be given 5 minutes for substantiating each of the points provided in their team's argument, and citing relevant research to back up each statement given in the initial presentation. In general, all statements should be identified clearly as either **fact or opinion**, and all statements of fact should be verified with concrete verifiable evidence from a credible source that is cited in the annotated bibliography.

In the class time provided, team members will begin finding facts to support the team's claims. In addition, each team member will be responsible for researching a fact or supporting a point for homework. **EACH MEMBER will turn in an**

individual annotated bibliography to show their individual contribution to the research. Remember that any proof the team provides will be attacked by the opposition in the final step of the debate, so it must be backed up with strong supporting data and an appropriate balance of ETHOS, PATHOS, AND LOGOS.

3. **REBUTTAL**

After the team has offered its support for its arguments, each team will have five minutes to refute the opposing team's argument. Probe the opposite team's evidence for weaknesses (insufficient data, weak sources, inconclusive or illogical arguments, etc.). While one person will deliver the rebuttal, the whole team should keep track of the opposition's points and evidence, and then, during a "working break," gather the points for a rebuttal as a team.

4. **SUMMARY OF DEBATE FORMAT**

A coin toss at the beginning of each debate will decide who will begin the debate, but in general, the format is as follows:

Affirmative	Negative
<p>Speaker 1: First Affirmative</p> <p>The first affirmative speaker defines the topic, outlines the affirmative team's plan, and then presents the first half of the affirmative argument</p>	<p>Speaker 1: Negative</p> <p>The first negative speaker attacks the affirmative team's definition of the topic (if necessary), argues against affirmative team's plan, presents a counterplan, (if appropriate), and argues against reasons presented in the affirmative team's argument.</p>
<p>Speaker 2: Second Affirmative</p> <p>The second affirmative speaker argues against the points made by the first negative speaker and rebuilds the affirmative case.</p>	<p>Speaker 2: Second Negative</p> <p>The second negative speaker continues the team's argument against the affirmative case.</p>
<p>Speaker 3: Affirmative Rebuttal</p> <p>This speaker rebuts the points of Speaker 2 on the negative side. S/he should not present any new evidence but instead summarize the case for the affirmative</p>	<p>Speaker 3: Negative Rebuttal</p> <p>This speaker rebuts the points of Speaker 3 on the affirmative side. S/he should not present any new evidence but instead summarize the case against the affirmative.</p>