

Debate Strategy Resources

Basic Terms:

Debate: A competition in which two opposing teams make speeches to support their arguments and disagree with those of the other team.

Resolution: A statement that individuals can have different opinions on.

Affirmative team: agrees with the resolution.

Negative team: disagrees with the resolution.

Rebuttal: explains why one team disagrees with the other team.

Evaluator: decide the winner.

Debate Procedure:

A resolution is introduced.

Students are assigned a position, either to agree with the resolution, (the affirmative position) or to disagree with it, (the negative position) or to be an evaluator of the debate.

Preparation

Debaters: Each side will be given an opportunity to prepare arguments that they will present during the debate. Debaters must work with their teammates to build an argument to defend the position assigned. Use the debate organizer to assist you in your preparation. (This form is also helpful to take notes during the debate and plan for the rebuttal)

Evaluators: The evaluators should read over the case and identify arguments for each side (they will need to be familiar with the arguments in order to judge the accuracy and effectiveness of the debaters). The evaluators should also review the guidelines for evaluating the debate. The guidelines should be used during the debate to take notes on the arguments.

The Debate

Presentation of the arguments: Each side will be given time to present their argument (generally 3-5 minutes). During the presentation of the arguments each side should present the points identified to defend their position, *this is not the time to present the flaws in the opponent's argument.*

The Rebuttal: Following the presentation of the arguments, each side is provided a few minutes to formulate a rebuttal. The rebuttal is the time to criticize the opponent's arguments. Notes taken during the opposing team's argument are useful to prepare the rebuttal.

The Decision

When the debate is concluded the evaluators will be given a few minutes to review their notes in order to reach a decision about who won the debate. Each evaluator should share their decision and reasons with the class.

Debate Preparation Worksheet

Collaborate with your team to complete this form. You will use this information to prepare your arguments for the debate.

1. Carefully read over the case and identify points that support your position. You may also do additional research if you have time.

Be sure to use evidence to support your arguments. The four kinds of evidence:

- **Example:** 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 -- this comes from research.
- **Statistics:** numbers -- this also comes from research.

2. Organize your argument. List each argument you can use to defend your position below. Be sure to include evidence to support the point. Make sure you include quotations and note sources as part of your evidence.

Argument 1:

Evidence:

Argument 2:

Evidence:

Argument 3:

Evidence:

Argument 4:

Evidence:

3. It is useful to anticipate and be prepared to counter the arguments of your opposition. List below what some of the opposition's arguments might be and how you can counter the arguments.

Opposing Argument 1:

Weakness or counter argument:

Opposing Argument 2:

Weakness or counter argument:

Opposing Argument 3:

Weakness or counter argument:

DEBATE RUBRIC

Assessing the Debaters

The rubric should be used to assess and provide feedback to the debaters after they have presented their arguments.

Category	Excellent 4-5 points	Adequate 2-3 points	Poor 0-1 point	Points Earned
Role	The point-of-view and arguments presented consistently represented the assigned role	The point-of-view and arguments presented usually represented the assigned role	The point-of-view and arguments presented did not represent the assigned role	
Argumentation	Every major point was well supported with several relevant facts, statistics and/or examples	Major points were mostly supported with relevant facts, statistics and/or examples	Facts, statistics and/or examples were missing or not used effectively to support the points	
Presentation	The presentation was very clear and well organized, and the presenter remained professional and civil	The presentation was generally clear and organized, and the presenter was mostly professional and civil	The presentation was not clear and/or not well organized, and/or the presenter was not professional	
Understanding of the Topic	The arguments presented demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the issues	The arguments presented demonstrated a general understanding of the issues	The arguments presented did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the issues	
Total Points				

