

How To Hold a Class Debate

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Debate any topic in your classroom using this class debate framework.

Difficulty: Average

Time Required: 1 Class

Here's How:

1. Introduce debates by producing the rubric that you will be using to grade them. For a sample rubric, please see related sites at the bottom of this page.
2. A few weeks before the debate(s), give students the topic(s) to be covered.
3. Have students give you an ordered list showing in which debates they prefer to participate in order of preference.
4. From these lists make a debate group consisting of two students for each side of your debate: pro and con.
5. Before you hand the debate assignments out, explain that some students might be debating positions opposite to their beliefs. This is an important skill for them to learn.
6. On the day of the debate, give students in the 'audience' a blank rubric. Explain that it is their job to judge the debate objectively.
7. Begin the debate with the pro side speaking first. Allow them 5-7 minutes of uninterrupted time to explain their position. Both members must participate equally.
8. Repeat step number seven for the con side.
9. Give both sides about three minutes to confer and prepare for their rebuttal.
10. Begin the rebuttals with the con side and give them three minutes to speak. Both members must participate equally.
11. Repeat step number 10 for the pro side.

DEBATE ROLES and RULES

Opening Statement Presenter:

Gathers the main arguments into an introductory statement. Does not give specific information; just says "this is true because of A and B and C."

1. _____

Topic Presenters:

Present the main arguments for the team. Each presenter give specific details that **prove** A and B and C.

(2 or 3)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Rebuttal Presenters:

Answer the arguments of the other team. These presenters must take notes as the other team is presenting their arguments and respond to every argument, using specific information to **disprove** them.

(1 or 2)

1. _____

2. _____

Closing Statement Presenter:

Presents the closing arguments for the team. Repeats the main idea for this and this and this reasons.

1. _____

Debate Rules

No put downs.

You must raise your hand if it's not your time to speak.

Teams lose 1 point for each interruption.

Teams lose 1 point for whispering while another speaker is talking.

TIMES

Opening statements for both sides = 3 minutes each

Arguments for both sides = 3 minutes each

Rebuttal conference = 1 minute

Rebuttals = 2 minutes each

Closing statements for both sides = 3 minutes each

The Debate

Date:

Class:

PRO

CON

Clear statement of main idea in opening statement

Points

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Rebuttals

Closing statement

DEBATE RUBRIC

Category	Presidential Debates	The Senate Floor	Student Council Election	Not Yet	Score
	4	3	2	1	
Addresses Issues	Always addresses topic	Usually addresses topic	Rarely addresses topic	Did not address topic	
Support with Facts	Uses many facts that support topic	Uses some facts that support topic	Uses few facts that support topic	Does not use facts that support topic	
Persuasiveness	Arguments clear and convincing	Arguments are sometimes clear and convincing	Arguments are rarely clear and convincing	Arguments are never clear and convincing	
Teamwork	Used team member effectively Equal timing	One member does the talking 75% of the time	One member does the talking 100% of the time	No one talks	
Organization	Electrifies audience in opening statement Closure convinces audience	Grabs attention Brings closure to the debate	Introduces topic and brings some closure to the debate	Does not introduce topic; no closure	

TOTAL _____

Debate scoring sheet

<http://myweb.lmu.edu/tshanahan/nt-debatescoring.html>