

Debate Guide For Genesis Group Project

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Time limits: 5 minutes on main speeches, 2.5 minutes for rebuttals.

Speaking notes: Use notes sparingly, but efficiently. They are necessary in good debating.

Sources of information: You will need many. In your debate you will be required to state your sources of information to prove the validity of your statements.

Outline of speech: Prepare a 75-150 word complete sentence outline to be handed to your instructor before the debate starts.

Number of speakers on a team: Two speakers on a team is the conventional number.

PURPOSE OF THE DEBATE

Debating can be done effectively and with good results in many classes. It provides excellent experience in communicating, since it pits two or more speakers with opposing ideas against each other. It tests their ability to express these ideas and to defend them under direct challenge. This teaches tact, resourcefulness, ability to think on one's feet, and it teaches that ideas must be backed by evidence, not by mere conjecture and opinion. Experience of this kind is beneficial and should be a part of every student's life.

EXPLANATION OF A DEBATE

A debate is a speaking situation in which two opposing ideas are presented and argued. The ideas represent solutions to a problem. The proponent of each solution attempts to convince his audience that her idea should be adopted in preference to all others. Actually, a debate, in the sense used here, consists of opposing speeches to convince.

A debate team may be composed of one, two, or more persons. Three speakers on a team may permit more exhaustive arguments, but they will take more time and unless they are skilled, much repetition and haggling may be encountered, which will dull the debate.

Debates are divided into main speeches and rebuttals. In carrying out a debate, the usual order of speakers for main speeches is: (1) first affirmative, (2) first negative, (3) second affirmative, (4) second negative. For rebuttals the order is: (1) first negative, (2) first affirmative, (3) second negative, and (4) second affirmative. It is at once apparent, when matching two-speaker teams, that the affirmative team leads off and closes the debate. Now should you have a one-speaker team, the affirmative will lead off with (for example) a five-minute speech. The negative will reply for seven minutes, after which the affirmative will conclude with a two-minute rebuttal. This arrangement gives each debater an equal amount of time.

SAMPLE RESOLUTIONS FOR DEBATE (Not appropriate for Genesis)

1. Resolved that federal population controls should be established.
2. Resolved that inter-racial marriages should be prohibited by law.
3. Resolved that all high school graduates should attend college at least one year.
4. Resolved that smoking should be prohibited by law.
5. Resolved that it is more desirable to own a _____ car than a _____ car.
6. Resolved that tipping should be abolished.
7. Resolved that capital punishment should be abolished.

HOW TO CHOOSE A TOPIC FOR DEBATE

Since two teams will be concerned with the choice of topic, it will be well to consult your opponents, at which time all of you will agree on a subject for debate. Remember that one team will uphold the proposition under debate, while the other will argue against it. So, in choosing a topic, it should also be decided which team will debate affirmative (for the topic) and which will debate negative (against it).

In arriving at an agreement on the subject, be sure that all of you have an interest in the subject and that you can find information about it. If you are in doubt about the availability of source materials, check with the librarian before making a final decision.

If you decide to argue a proposition which is not listed in Suggested Topics For Debate, remember it must be phrased so that it proposes a specific proposition to be adopted or rejected. In other words, be sure that you have a debatable subject.

HOW TO PREPARE A DEBATE

As stated earlier in this chapter, a debate is really two or more opposing speeches to convince. Your purpose, then, is to convince your audience that you are correct in your point of view. To refresh your memory about the speech to convince, reread the chapter bearing this heading.

Because a debate is an activity in which two colleagues team against two other colleagues, it is necessary that preparation for the contest be made jointly by each pair of debaters. This can best be done if the following suggestions are carried out:

1. Decide who will be the first speaker.
2. Make a mutual agreement that both colleagues will search for materials to prove your side of the question. Later these materials can be exchanged to help each of you to strengthen your cases.
3. Begin your hunt for information on your subject. Whenever you find something pertinent, take notes on it. Be sure to be record the information to correctly cite your reference. Take your notes on four inch by six inch cards; then at the top of each card write briefly what the notes on that card concern.

HOW TO ORGANIZE A DEBATE SPEECH

After you have gathered your material, you will begin organizing your case. This part of your preparation will require some stiff head work; however, it is not particularly difficult. The following suggestions will tell you how to organize a debate case.

- I. Divide your entire case into three parts. These parts are called stock issues. An affirmative must prove all three issues; a negative can win by disproving any one of the issues.
 - A. Show a need for the specific proposal you are offering.
 - B. Show that your proposal is practical. In other words, show that it will do what you say it will do.
 - C. Show that your proposal is desirable. This means to show that the way in which it will work will be beneficial. If you are arguing that capital punishment should be abolished, the question arises as to whether or not it will be desirable for the nation to pay taxes to keep convicted murderers alive for thirty years.

- II. Your finished case should be set up as follows:
- A. State your proposition.
 - B. Define your terms. If you are arguing that compulsory military training should be established in the United States, you must tell what you mean by "compulsory." Will anyone be excepted? What does "military training" mean? Does it refer to the infantry, the air force, or a technical school for atomic specialists? In other words, state exactly what you are talking about.
 - C. Show that your proposal is needed (stock issue). To prove the need give examples, illustrations, opinions of authorities, facts, and analogies which all point to the need for your proposition. Give enough of these proofs to establish your point.
 - D. Show that your proposition is practical (it will work). This your second stock issue. Give proofs as you did to establish your need in point C above.
 - E. Show that your proposal is desirable (its results will be beneficial). This is your third stock issue. Give proofs as you did in point C above.
 - F. Summarize your speech, then close it by stating your belief in your proposal.
- III. Colleagues should divide their case. The first speaker often defines the terms and sets up the need. If time permits, he may establish the practicality and desirability of the proposal; however, the second speaker usually takes one or both of these points. This matter must be settled and agreed on by colleagues before cases are organized. A speaker should not spread himself so thin that he proves nothing. A second speaker should re-establish the need set up by his colleague if an Opponent attacks it. After doing this, he goes into his points.
- IV. Rebuttal is easy if you follow a plan.
- A. Colleagues should agree ahead of time regarding which points each one will defend. This agreement should be adhered to, otherwise confusion results.
 - B. In refuting points, try to run the debate. Take the offensive. This is easy but you must follow a plan. The plan is to take your main speech point by point. Reiterate the first point you made, tell what the opposition did to disprove it; then give more evidence to re-establish it. Now take your second point, do exactly the same thing over again. Continue this strategy throughout your rebuttal and close with a summary, followed by a statement of your belief in the soundness of your proposal.
- Do not talk about points brought up by your opponents, except as you refer to them while you re-emphasize your own points. You must carry out this plan of advancing your own case or you will be likely to confuse yourself and your audience. Refuse to be budged from the consideration of your plan for advancing your own case.
- V. The points (stock issues) listed above apply to both affirmative and negative speakers. When each team tries to run the debate, that is, take the offensive, there is a real argument. Because each plays upon his own case, the two proposals and their arguments are easily followed. It should be noted, too, that negative cases oppose affirmative cases by showing that any one of the stock issues does not hold, that is, the proposal is not

needed, not practical, or not desirable. By disproving any one of these points, a negative causes an affirmative to fall, since the affirmative must prove all of them.

- VI. Colleagues should plan their cases together and rehearse them together. They should have their material so well in mind that they need make little reference to their notes, except when bringing up objections raised by the opposition. Practice should be continued until a student feels complete mastery of his material. He should not memorize a debate speech word for word. He should know his sequence of points and his evidence to prove his point. Besides this, he needs a well-planned introduction and conclusion.

HOW TO PRESENT A DEBATE

A debater's attitude should be one of confidence but not "cockiness". He should be friendly, firm, polite and very eager to be understood. A sense of humor is helpful if well applied.

When a debater rises to speak, he should address the chairman, and then greet his audience and opponents by saying "Friends." No more is needed. The debater should make a few introductory remarks about the occasion, the audience, and pleasure of debating a timely question. He should move into the debate by defining his terms. This should all be done informally and sincerely in a truly communicative manner. There is no reason why a debate should be a formal, cold, stilted, unfriendly affair.

After a debate is concluded and the decision announced by the chairman, it is customary and advisable for the teams to rise, meet in mid-stage, and shake hands all around.

HOW A DEBATE IS CONDUCTED

1. The two teams sit at tables on opposite sides of the platform. They face the audience. A chairman sits between the tables or in some other convenient place on stage.
2. A time-keeper sits on the front row in the audience. He signals the debaters by raising his fingers. If two fingers are up, he means that the speaker has two minutes left. When time is "up," he raises his hand palm out, or he stands. The speaker should stop speaking within ten seconds after the final signal.
3. The members of the class will serve as judges. They are provided with ballots which carry spaces in which to write their decisions. After a debate is concluded, the judges, without consultation, immediately write their decision, sign the ballots, and hand them in to the instructor.
4. To start a debate, the instructor will read the debate question to the audience, and introduce the debate teams. He then announces the first speaker, who opens the debate. The subsequent debaters simply rise in their proper order and present their cases.

SOURCE FOR THIS GUIDE

Adapted from Carlile, Clark S. 38 Basic Speech Experiences. Pocatello, ID: Clark Publishing, 1977.