

DEBATE FORMAT



Debates with students can be as informal as a “crossfire”, to a formal debate that requires a specific format, time regulations and mediators. Whatever method you choose will depend on the issue involved, your students, time constraints and the depth of analysis you want your students to reach.

Debates – Debates are more formal than “crossfires” and usually are planned in advance. Students know what the issue will be at least a few days to a week ahead of time and they also know what side of the issue they will be defending. Students are to use the time prior to the debate to research the issue and to gather facts and statistics that will help support their opinions and beliefs. They may also research the issue to help gain insight to the viewpoints other students might express during the debate. This research will help prepare students for the debate’s rebuttal.

Debate Format

Statements are given in this order:

*First Affirmative Constructive	(2.5 minutes) 1stPRO TEAM OF 3
*First Negative Constructive	(2.5 minutes) 1stCON TEAM OF 3
*Second Affirmative Constructive	(2.5 minutes) 2ndPRO TEAM OF 3
*Second Negative Constructive	(2.5 minutes) 2ndCON TEAM OF 3

Brief Recess (5 minutes)

First Negative Rebuttal	(1.5 minute) CON Response team of 2
First Affirmative Defense	(1.5 minute) PRO Support team of 2
First Affirmative Rebuttal	(1.5 minute) PRO Response team of 2
First Negative Defense	(1.5 minute) CON Support team of 2

Brief Recess (2 minutes)

Second Negative Rebuttal	(1 minute) CON Response team of 1-2
Second Affirmative Defense	(1 minute) PRO Support team of 1-2
Second Affirmative Rebuttal	(1 minute) PRO Response team of 1-2
Second Negative Defense	(1 minute) CON Support team of 1-2

1-2 Persons for each team may be used as “**searchers**”. These people can spend the time fact finding for responses to provide for the team’s debaters

HOW TO DEBATE

- Allow **2.5 minutes** for each constructive statement. Students on the same side of an issue may help their teammates by adding onto statements as long as there is time remaining on the clock
- Allow **1/1.5 minutes** for each rebuttal statement. Students on the same side of an issue may help their teammates by adding onto rebuttal statements as long as there is time remaining on the clock
- Allow **1/1.5 minutes** for each defense statement. Students on the same side of an issue may help their teammates by adding onto defense statements as long as there is time remaining on the clock. **Defense is optional during any debate. Debates my end with the rebuttal statements without either side having a chance to build their statements up again.**
- **Affirmative Constructive Statements** are supported by facts, statistics, evidence and logical analysis. They may summarize the problem and state possible resolutions. They should show why the **status quo must be changed** and they should illustrate why an alternative plan is better. A description of an alternative plan should include who would oversee the new plan, should state the actions needed and should show how these actions would be funded. The Affirmative Constructive Statements should show how it has been harmful to maintain the status quo and they should show how the proposed resolution(s) would eliminate the current problem.
- **Negative Constructive Statements** do not support change from the status quo and they should attack the evidence stated in the Affirmative Constructive Statements with evidence, facts and statistics of their own. They need to discredit resolutions proposed by the affirmative side and point out disadvantages of the new plan. They need to build a case that supports the status quo.
- **Rebuttal Statements** attack specific points of each of the Constructive Statements of the opposing side. They may introduce new evidence but cannot introduce new arguments.
- **Defense Statements** simply rebuild the original statements after the rebuttal has tried to discredit them. No new arguments are permitted during the defense; only clarification of the Constructive Statements is permitted during the defense.

