

# DEBATING

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- a) Objectives
- b) The basics
- c) Procedure and times
- d) Roles (moderator, timekeeper)
- e) Room set up
- f) Judging Ideas
- g) How to prepare for a debate
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## A. OBJECTIVES

Debating is a brilliant way to develop sophisticated critical thinking, dazzling public speaking skills, strong research skills, and the enjoyment of ideas and issues. There are many different types, and most are quite straightforward and accessible for all students, and many types can involve a whole class through various roles.

## B. THE BASICS

### Resolution

<b>Resolution</b> = the issue to be argued over
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- Every debate has a resolution.
- The resolution is usually phrased with the words “Be it resolved that...” and then the issue. For example: be it resolved that (or “BIRT”) a bath is better than a shower.
- Sometimes the topics are comparative (as above) and sometimes they are a simple statement (BIRT that the war in Afghanistan is unnecessary).
- There are value debates (BIRT that evil is more interesting than goodness) and policy debates (BIRT that uniforms should be abolished).
- Sometimes the topics are serious (i.e. war and politics) and sometimes ridiculous (BIRT Humpty Dumpty deserved everything he got).
- see sample resolutions sheet

### Types of Debate

- **Parliamentary**: this is the same format as ...the parliament. Speakers give their speeches and during these speeches, members of the opposition interrupt (politely and with permission) to ask questions and heckle.
- **Cross-Examination**: this is a form where the speaker gives their points, finishes, then is questioned by a member of the opposite team.
- **Discussion**: this is when each speaker makes a speech (all four, one after the other), then debaters raise their hands (acknowledged by moderator) to raise a question, comment, or answer.

## The sides

**Affirmative**= the side that AGREES with the resolution  
**Negative** = the side that DISAGREES with the resolution

- What each side must do:
  - The affirmative must define all the terms of the debate and the reasons why the case is a good one.
  - The negative must simply prove the affirmative is wrong. I.e. if the debate is BIRT orange is the best colour, then the affirmative has to give all the reasons. The negative does not have to prove that another colour is better; they simply have to prove that the affirmative's arguments are flawed, and that orange is not the best colour.
- There are two speakers on each side. Thus, the first speaker on the affirmative team is called the 1<sup>st</sup> affirmative, and so on.
- Each debater has to debate both sides – often twice. That is to say that the best debaters win regardless of which side is “right” or the side they agree with.
- see sheet on brainstorming ideas for topics you don't agree with

## Constructive speech

**Constructive speech** = the speech in which the debater lists all of their main points and all evidence to support these points.

- In most cross-examination debates, each debater speaks for 6 minutes (though this can be much shorter in class debates)

## Cross-examination

**Cross-examination** = after speaking, each debater is questioned by a member of the opposite team

- The point of cross-examination is to ask questions which demonstrate flaws in the opponent's case
- Points are awarded for questions and for answers

## Rebuttal

**Rebuttal** = direct attack of the opponents comments (made during the constructive speech)

- The best debating is all about “clash”. That is to say, it is a direct attack of specific arguments. If one side gets up and says all the reasons they like orange, and the other side states all the reasons they like blue – there has been no clash. Debaters need to directly attack and respond to each other's comments.
- After a speaker has cross examined the other speaker, and before they begin their own speech, they rebut, comments made by their opponent. This gives them a chance to show they understand and can challenge specific points. Sometimes this is done in a specific rebuttal but the best debaters do the rebuttal throughout.

## C. CROSS EXAMINATION STYLE: PROCEDURE AND TIMES

### The short list

1 <sup>st</sup> Affirmative speech	4 minutes
1 <sup>st</sup> Negative cross ex	2 minutes
1 <sup>st</sup> Negative speech	5 minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> Affirmative cross ex	2 minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> Affirmative speech	6 minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> Negative cross ex	2 minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> Negative speech	6 minutes
1 <sup>st</sup> Affirmative cross ex	2 minutes
1 <sup>st</sup> Negative rebuttal and summary	1 minute
1 <sup>st</sup> Affirmative rebuttal and summary	2 minutes

### The detailed list

<p><b>1. 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative constructive speech (4 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• opens by stating the resolution</li><li>• defines the resolution and any of the terms</li><li>• outlines what the major points of the Affirmative case (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> speakers)</li><li>• discusses each point in detail, providing evidence and examples for each</li><li>• reviews and summarizes</li><li>• ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, the resolution must stand. I now stand open for cross-examination”</li></ul>
<p><b>2. 1<sup>st</sup> Negative cross examines 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative (2 minutes)</b></p>
<p><b>3. 1<sup>st</sup> Negative rebuttal and constructive speech (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• opens by stating that the resolution must not pass</li><li>• rebuts everything the 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative has just said (both in 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative speech and in answers in cross-ex)</li><li>• outlines the major points of the Negative case</li><li>• discusses each point in detail, giving evidence and examples for each</li><li>• reviews and summarizes</li><li>• ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, the resolution must fall. I now stand open for cross-examination”</li></ul>
<p><b>4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Affirmative cross-examines 1<sup>st</sup> Negative (2 minutes)</b></p>
<p><b>5. 2<sup>nd</sup> Affirmative rebuttal and constructive speech (6 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• opens by stating that the resolution must pass</li><li>• rebuts everything the 1<sup>st</sup> Negative has said (both in 1<sup>st</sup> Negative constructive speech and in answers to cross-ex)</li><li>• discusses the rest of the Affirmative points – providing evidence and examples for each</li><li>• reviews and summarizes</li><li>• ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, the resolution must stand. I now stand open for cross-examination”</li></ul>
<p><b>6. 2<sup>nd</sup> Negative cross-examines 2<sup>nd</sup> Affirmative (2 minutes)</b></p>

- 7. **2<sup>nd</sup> Negative rebuttal and constructive speech (6 minutes)**
  - opens by stating that the resolution must not pass
  - rebuts everything the 2<sup>nd</sup> Affirmative has just said (both in 2<sup>nd</sup> Affirmative speech and in answers in cross-ex)
  - outlines the major points of the Negative case
  - discusses each point in detail, giving evidence and examples for each
  - reviews and summarizes
  - ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, the resolution must fall. I now stand open for cross-examination”
- 8. **1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative cross examines 2<sup>nd</sup> Negative (2 minutes)**
- 9. **1<sup>st</sup> Negative conclusion (1 minute)**
  - rebuts all Affirmative points
  - briefly summarizes key points in the Negative case
  - ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, this resolution must fall.”
- 10. **1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative rebuttal and conclusion (2 minutes)**
  - rebuts all negative points (in entire debate)
  - briefly summarizes key points in the Affirmative case
  - ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, this resolution must stand.”

**D. ROLES**

**Moderator**

**Moderator** = the person who introduces the speakers and gives the instructions in a debate

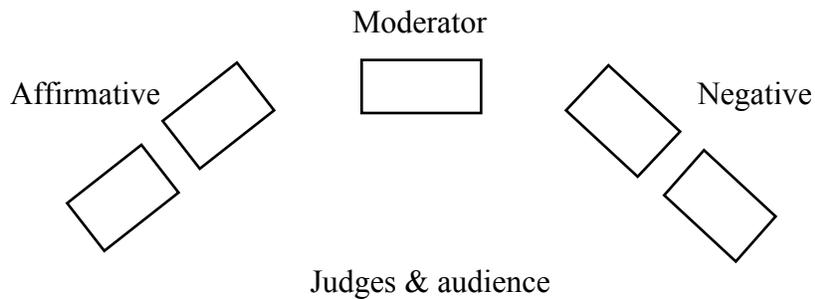
- The moderator has a script that they read from.
- see attached moderator’s script

**Timekeeper**

**Timekeeper** = keeps time and gives count down warnings

- The timekeeper also provides minute warnings (i.e. 1 minute remaining, 30 seconds remaining, 5 seconds remaining, time out)

**E. ROOM SET UP**



## **F. JUDGING**

- Debate is scored on 5 categories. Each category is usually out of 10 marks for a total of 50  
Information  
Delivery  
Questions and Answers (5 points each)  
Rebuttal  
Organization
- Final scores are similar to grades:  
25 – 35 below average  
35 – 40 potential to good (organized, some clash, mapping)  
40 – 45 very good (persuasive, organized, challenge every point, excellent delivery)  
45 – 50 the next Prime Minister
- debating can be scored formally or informally (see sheets)

## **G. HOW TO PREPARE FOR A DEBATE**

### **Formal debate**

1. Put the resolution on the board.
2. Start by brainstorming ideas for the affirmative side. Each student has to write down at least one idea why the resolution is correct and then brainstorm out loud with someone writing down the points on the board.
3. Move to the negative side, and repeat.
4. Go back and think of points to research.
5. Put students into teams.
6. Decide who will be the first/second speakers on each side.
7. Divide the points up between the first and second speakers.
8. Define needed terms.
9. Give out speech format sheet.
10. Students write speeches.
11. Choose a moderator and timekeeper for each round.
12. Run the debate.

### **Impromptu debate (to complete within one class) – Cross Examination style**

1. Put the resolution on the board.
2. Divide students into teams of two.
3. Decide which team(s) will be affirmative/negative.
4. Give teams 5-10 minutes to brainstorm their points and write their speeches.
5. Choose a timekeeper, (and moderator), everyone else will be a judge.
6. During the time when debaters are preparing, review something like “constructive criticism.” Make sure each judge has a sheet upon which to write a compliment for each debater (and piece of constructive criticism if you feel up to it).
7. Run the debate (as a cross-ex or a discussion-style – see below).
8. Facilitate a round of compliments (and optional constructive criticism).

## **The Basics of Cross Examination Debate**

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- 1. 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative constructive speech (4 minutes)**
  - opens by stating the resolution
  - defines the resolution and any of the terms
  - outlines the major points of the Affirmative case (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> speakers)
  - discusses each point in detail, providing evidence and examples for each
  - reviews and summarizes
  - ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, the resolution must stand. I now stand open for cross-examination”.
- 2. 1<sup>st</sup> Negative cross examines 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative (2 minutes)**
- 3. 1<sup>st</sup> Negative rebuttal and constructive speech (5 minutes)**
  - begins with a rebuttal of comments made by the 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative (1-2 minutes)
  - opens constructive speech by stating that the resolution must not pass
  - outlines the major points of the Negative case
  - discusses each point in detail, giving evidence and examples for each point
  - reviews and summarizes
  - ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, the resolution must fall. I now stand open for cross-examination”.
- 4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Affirmative cross-examines 1<sup>st</sup> Negative (2 minutes)**
- 5. 2<sup>nd</sup> Affirmative rebuttal and constructive speech (6 minutes)**
  - begins with a rebuttal of comments made by the 1<sup>st</sup> Negative (1-2 minutes)
  - opens constructive speech by stating that the resolution must pass
  - discusses the rest of the Affirmative points – providing evidence and examples for each
  - reviews and summarizes
  - ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, the resolution must stand. I now stand open for cross-examination”
- 6. 2<sup>nd</sup> Negative cross examines 2<sup>nd</sup> Affirmative (2 minutes)**
- 7. 2<sup>nd</sup> Negative rebuttal and constructive speech (6 minutes)**
  - begins with a rebuttal of comments made by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Affirmative (1-2 minutes)
  - opens constructive speech by stating that the resolution must not pass
  - outlines the major points of the Negative case
  - discusses each point in detail, giving evidence and examples for each
  - reviews and summarizes
  - ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, the resolution must fall. I now stand open for cross-examination”
- 8. 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative cross examines 2<sup>nd</sup> Negative (2 minutes)**
- 9. 1<sup>st</sup> Negative conclusion (1 minute)**
  - rebuts all Affirmative points
  - briefly summarizes key points in the Negative case
  - ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, this resolution must fall.”
- 10. 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative rebuttal and conclusion (2 minutes)**
  - rebuts all negative points (in entire debate)
  - briefly summarizes key points in the Affirmative case
  - ends by stating “therefore, M. Moderator, this resolution must stand.”

## HOW TO GIVE A DEBATE SPEECH

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### **1<sup>ST</sup> AFFIRMATIVE**

All speeches should begin with “*Honourable judges, worthy opponents (& if there are any audience members), and welcome guests.*” Next the 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative should say something like “*The resolution that stands before us today is of crucial importance because it questions the very nature of our society*” (or our education system, legal system etc. depending on the resolution). “*Before giving my constructive speech, I would first like to define the resolution.*” The terms should be defined, then the 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative should say “*The points I will be presenting today in support of the affirmative’s deep conviction in the truth of the resolution are*” (outline points). “*My partner will expand on my contentions and present the following points for your consideration*” (outline partner’s points). “*I will now commence my constructive speech.*”

Give two or three points and examples.

If you have time, you can conclude by summarizing what you have said. If not, say something rousing. E.g. “*Ladies and Gentlemen, we hope you believe as we do, that this resolution MUST STAND.*” Then finish with “*I now stand open for cross examination.*” Remain standing, waiting to be cross examined.

### **1<sup>ST</sup> NEGATIVE**

After the opening welcome, the 1<sup>st</sup> Negative should say “*Before commencing my constructive speech, I would first like to rebut a few of the more obvious fallacies in my opponent’s case.*” The 1<sup>st</sup> Negative should then argue against the key points the 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative made in his or her speech and cross examine. After rebutting for one to two minutes (the longer the better), the Negative should redefine the resolution if necessary – if it affects the Negative’s arguments in a harmful way if the Affirmative’s definition is accepted. Don’t redefine just for the sake of it. The 1<sup>st</sup> Negative then proceeds as the 1<sup>st</sup> Affirmative did.

### **2<sup>ND</sup> AFFIRMATIVE AND 2<sup>ND</sup> NEGATIVE**

Welcome

Restate resolution (not mandatory)

Rebuttal

Statement of the organization of points

Points

Can restate points made in conclusion by the whole team

Cross Examination

### **SUMMARY SPEECHES**

Sum up the key points of disagreement with the opposing team.

Sum up your team’s key points.