

Academic Debates

What is a debate?

A debate is a for or against argument. You have to debate why your position is correct and why your opponents are wrong. You are allocated a time to present your arguments and add rebuttals to the opposing points. You need to support your ideas with evidence such as facts, figures, stats and sources.



The topic.

The topic is often current issues of public importance ("Climate change should be taken more seriously") or about general philosophies or ideas ("beauty is better than brains"). The team that agrees with the topic is called the AFFIRMATIVE and the team that disagrees with the topic is called the NEGATIVE (or the 'opposition').

The set up.

Usually, the debate consists of two teams of three speakers. There should be a time-keeper and a judge(s) (sometimes this is the audience). Each presenter has a specific time (4 minutes) to present ideas and their rebuttals and after each presenter has spoken, the judge(s) evaluate the debate on the basis of the content, style and strategy of speeches.

A Basic Debate [4 minutes per person]

- **First speaker Affirmative**

Definition / key words.

Introduces team's argument.

[time keeper rings bell once at 3 minutes & twice at 4 minutes = time up]

- **Second speaker Negative**

Defines key words / terms.

Introduces team's argument.

Rebuttal.

['rebuttal' means choose a point from the opposite team and prove why this is wrong]

- **Third speaker Affirmative / Fourth speaker Negative**

Continue arguments and rebuttals.

- **Fifth speaker Affirmative / Sixth speaker Affirmative**

Rebut opposition's debate & summaries their key points.

- **The adjudicators** / judges decide who won the debate.

- The teams thank each other.

Debate Topics

Public importance (2017)

1. Can terrorism be prevented?
2. Is Brexit economic suicide?
3. Should developed countries provide aid to developing countries devastated by hurricanes?
4. Should the US go to war against North Korea?
5. Is Facebook too big to prevent grooming?
6. Is nuclear energy the best investment for power in the UK?
7. Can immigration from Africa to Europe be restricted?
8. Are university vice-principals over-paid?
9. Will white-supremacy ever be out-lawed?
10. Should use-once plastics be banned?

General

1. Does life exist on other planets?
2. Is America's 'War on Terror' justifiable?
3. Does the death penalty prevent crime?
4. Are single-sex schools better?
5. Is cloning ethical?
6. Is euthanasia justified?
7. Does technology make us more alone?
8. Do violent video games lead to violence?
9. Can money buy happiness?
10. Should Higher Education be free?
11. Is it ethical to eat meat?
12. Can politicians be trusted?
13. Should gay marriage be legalized?
14. Is CCTV an invasion of privacy?
15. Can the news media be trusted in providing unbiased news reporting?
16. Are we becoming too dependent on Google?
17. Is gender inequality still prevalent?
18. Should we colonize Mars?