

How to Win a Debate

Format

Team	Action	Time
Pro	Opening remarks	5
Con	Opening remarks	5
Con	Rebuttal of Pro	4
Pro	Rebuttal of Con	4
Con	Questions to Pro	1.5
Pro	Answers to questions from Con	4
Pro	Questions to Con	1.5
Con	Answers to questions from Pro	4
Pro	Closing remarks	4
Con	Closing remarks	4

Research and Know Your Topic

- **Begin with appropriate chapter from text.**
- **Supplement with suggested readings at end of chapter.**
- **Identify and use other credible sources.**

Opening Remarks: Formulate Persuasive Arguments

- **Begin with 10 or more arguments that you believe are persuasive for your side.**
- **Winnow these down to the three arguments for your opening presentation and to use as running themes.**
- **“Best” in this context are arguments that can withstand criticism from opponents.**
- **Ask “if our opponents win, how will they accomplish it? If the audience votes against us, where will their reasoning begin?” Work backwards from answers to formulate your arguments.**

Rebuttal: Anticipate Your Opponent's Arguments

- **Your opponent will have done what you've done in step 2. Anticipate their arguments.**
- **Prepare rebuttals to all possible arguments by your opponents, whether or not you think they are likely to be used.**
 - **Remember, they may try to do something unexpected.**
- **Focus on legitimate counter-arguments:**
 - **the empirical veracity of the premises**
 - **the deductive validity of the conclusions**

Questions: Probe Your Opponent's Weaknesses

- **You get to raise uncomfortable issues designed to undermine their arguments.**
- **What are the greatest weaknesses in their case?**
- **Structure your questions to highlight these weaknesses.**
- **Aim for 1-3 pointed questions (1.5 minutes)**

Answering Questions: Anticipate What Your Opponent Will Ask

- **Your opponent will have just done step 4 as well. What are the most troublesome and vexing questions they are likely to ask you?**
- **Prepare a response that answers the question the best you can. Be succinct.**

Closing Remarks

- **Frame the central issue in the debate. Where do you and your opponent disagree?**
- **Repeat your most persuasive points that relate to this central disagreement.**
- **Address any lingering criticisms and questions.**
- **Highlight the primary weaknesses in your opponent's argument.**
- **Do not try to win every issue or point. Focus on the relative strength of your arguments. Why are your arguments more important than theirs?**

Key: Teamwork

- **Have a strategic plan before the debate begins.**
 - **Know what you want to say and stick to the message.**
- **Establish roles for each member.**
- **Practice your presentation in front of each other. Support your team members through constructive criticism and suggestions.**
 - **Be kind, if for no other reason than you need an effective team.**

Key: Preparation

- **Opening remarks are highly structured and relatively easy to deliver.**
- **All other stages must be prepped in advance.**
 - **For each argument your opponent might make, prepare a separate sheet with that argument on the top and your rebuttal beneath.**
 - **For every question they might ask you, prepare a separate sheet with that question at the top and your answer beneath.**
 - **Redundancy is a virtue!**
- **Each speaker for the next phase should be “pulling” these sheets as the current speaker is addressing the audience and bring them to the podium.**
 - **Assistance is good, but ultimately each speaker must be in charge of his or her own remarks.**

Feb. 21: Free trade hurts the working class in the United States

Abel, Cameron

Caesar, Sumner

Celeda, Nicola

Cha, Andrew

Guyer, Mary

Hillman, Christian

Hwang, Kevin

Ibarra, Anahi

Willard, Eric

Teaching Assistant:

Carcelli, Shannon

Teaching Apprentice:

Qin, Jesse

Feb. 24: Governments should negotiate with terrorist groups to resolve differences

Asker-Svedberg, Andrea

Attar, Natalie

Corrales, Juan

Huang, Andrew

Huynh, Pamela

Leeburg, Brian

McCaffrey, Alan

Paige, Nicole

Perez, Jocelyn

Teaching Assistant:

Carcelli, Shannon

Teaching Apprentice:

Alkass, David

Zhu, Rose

Feb. 26: The US should participate in the ICC

Bayardo-Bucardo, Luis

Cason, Amanda

Cruz, Annette

Day, Robert

Du, Sophie

McLeod, Jensen

Mireles Elizabeth

Pedri, Hannah

Pedro-avila, Sinnai

Teaching Assistant:

Merrell, Brandon

Teaching Apprentice:

Goldenberg, Emily

Feb. 28: Nuclear weapons make the world a safer place

Cruz, Victor

Durkee, John

Gravell, Lucas

Luthra, Advait

Morales, Kalvin

O'Loughlin, John

Oh, Jiwon

Stout-Blackman, Mason

Tsolmonkhuu, Melody Uyanga

Teaching Assistant:

Merrell, Brandon

Teaching Apprentice:

Fields, William

March 3: The United Nations should intervene in Syria

Bsaibes, Joe

Delgado, Anayeli

Gordillo, Alberto

Hampton, Quinlan

Horton, Jeremiah

Jamjoom, Maryam

Persons, Katherine

Sonboli, Maryam

Srivastava, Sagar

Teaching Assistant:

Merrell, Brandon

Teaching Apprentice:

Folsom, Jessica

March 5: The US should promote women's rights in countries where they are not now respected

Chen, Emily

Heath, Brittany

Lee, Michelle

Randolph, Cassondra

Ruckstuhl, Megan

Szwaykowski, Alexander

Ukrainetz, Madisyn

Voight, Alexandra

Wong-Toi, Joanne

Teaching Assistant:

Merrell, Brandon

Teaching Apprentice:

Kim, Habyel

Emmrick, Rebecca

March 7: The US should unilaterally reduce its carbon emissions

Bright, Megan

Dang, Deanna

Gonzalez, Perla

Gyorffy, Cameron

Hidalgo, Rey

McCrory, Hannah

Mitchell, Kathleen

Neil, Amelia

Ramanarayanan, Kamakshi

Teaching Assistant:

Merrell, Brandon

Teaching Apprentice:

Johns, Amy

Banerjee, Shreya

March 10: The US should not intervene in foreign conflicts without UN approval

Beloff, Alexander

Chen, Yixian

Everingham, Dylan

Levin, Benjamin

Liu, Joseph

Morin, Wyatt

Shin, Michelle

Tran, Ian

Yoshihara, Motoyuki

Teaching Assistant:

Carcelli, Shannon

Teaching Apprentice:

Nadurata, Edward

Bagdassarian, Eugenia

March 12: China's rising power is a threat to the US.

Chen, Jonathan

Choi, Cyn Hee

Han, Byoung Hoon

Ku, Yiyu

Li, Hounong

Miller, Tyler

Serna, Erik

Wood, Cooper

Zhang, Zheng

Teaching Assistant:

Carcelli, Shannon

Teaching Apprentice:

Strasser, Gabrielle

Chang, Irene

March 14: Developed countries have an obligation to provide aid to developing countries

Anatalio, Joshua

Hauss, Samuel

Nguyen, Diana

Nguyen, Luan

Pak, Jacequeline

Parfait, Audrey

Sun, Yi

Thai, Cindy

Vo, Allison

Teaching Assistant:

Carcelli, Shannon

Teaching Apprentice:

Sarkozi, Ashley

Tilfors, Emma