

Debate

Your final assignment for this class will be to debate one topic with one other student (or rarely two other students). This assignment is worth **30 points** or 30% of your final grade.

Your topics for the debate will be chosen today.

- Today, you will choose three possible topics that you want to debate.
- Next class, I will give you back two of the debate topics.
- You must prepare for **both** of the debate topics and **both** sides of that issue (pro and con).
- On the day of the debate, I will tell you your topic and the side that you must debate. You will not know before hand what your topic will be exactly, but you will have a general idea with only four possibilities (topic 1 pro, topic 1 con, topic 2 pro, and topic 2 con).

Your debates will be ten minutes long (5 minutes for each person) and will be strictly divided into four sections.

- Introduction: 1 minute per person
 - During the introduction, you should present a minimum of three main reasons why your side is correct. You should support these reasons with evidence and examples, but you must be quick and concise.
- Rebuttal: 1 minute per person
 - While your opponent is giving their introduction, you should be listening carefully and taking notes. During the rebuttal, you should mention each of your opponent's main reasons and give a counterpoint for each reason. You may concede that certain reasons are true, but overall must say why your side is better than theirs.
- Cross-Examination: 2 minutes per person
 - During the introduction and rebuttal, you are debating with your opponent, but you never talk to them directly or ask them questions. During the cross-examination, you may ask your opponent questions directly, and he or she can answer with short replies (no more than 15 seconds). Opponents cannot talk unless asked a direct question. You may also use this time to clarify any points that you think were unclear.
- Conclusion: 1 minute per person
 - In this part of the debate, you should restate the main reasons that your side is correct, and the other side is incorrect. This is basically a summary of your argument.

Preparing for your debate:

- Notice that the only part of the debate that you can prepare in advance is the introduction. Everything else in the debate should be based on carefully listening to your opponent and replying appropriately.
- Before the debate, find articles about your topic and learn more information. Become familiar with vocabulary and ideas related to your topics.
- During the debate, you can bring any notes or articles with you to the front of the class. However, you should NOT read during the debate. You should be very familiar with any sources or ideas you use so that you can refer to points quickly without reading.
- On Wednesday, December 2nd, we will be doing a class-wide debate for practice. The topic will be given to you on the debate day, and the class will be divided in half. You will be given a short time to prepare each part of the debate together.
- On Monday, December 7th, you will have time to practice your individual topics. You will get into groups of 4 students. One student will chose a topic and side (from his or her topics), and the other three students will argue the other side. This will run like a real debate with no preparation time in between, so you should be ready in advance. I strongly suggest you choose the topic and side that you think is your weakest point, so that you can prepare for the worst situation.

Your final debates will be graded on the following:

- Clarity of ideas: Can I understand the points that you are trying to make?
- Organization of ideas: Do you put similar information together in a reasonable way?
- Understanding of and response to your opponent's ideas.
- Knowledge of the topic: Are you familiar with the main arguments for your topic? Do you understand the vocabulary and ideas related to your topic?
- Ability to answer your opponent's questions.
- Confidence and poise: Do you remain polite and composed during your debate?
- Pronunciation
- Word Use
- Grammar
- Student Responses

Your final debates will be held on **December 9th and 14th**.

You will not know the day of your debate in advance unless you have a reasonable excuse not to go one day, so everyone should be prepared on December 9th. If you cannot attend on one day, you need to let me know **as soon as possible**. Last minute excuses will not be accepted except in cases of emergency. It is extremely difficult to reschedule debates, so do not try to change your debate day unless it is absolutely necessary.