

## Polite Debate & Debate Strategy

- I. Introduction: We've already discussed persuasion and effective methods of communicating your thoughts or ideas in a convincing way. What do you do when someone is challenging your ideas on the spot? Debate!
  - a. History of Debate: Political/Religious, Serious/Inconsequential
  - b. Sample uses
    - i. Practically – I liked the movie vs. I didn't like the movie
    - ii. Academically – Raising student loan interest rates...
    - iii. Professionally – in the workplace, electronic debates
    - iv. What else?
- II. Let's review the rules of Polite Debate (handout)
  - a. DO:
    - i. Speak clearly in a well-constructed way
    - ii. Remain polite and considerate
    - iii. Speak to your opponent and the audience
    - iv. Wait until your opponent has finished before speaking
    - v. Focus your response directly to your opponent's speech
    - vi. Know your main points and come prepared
    - vii. Dress/fashion yourself appropriately if public
  - b. DON'T:
    - i. Fill your speech with "Um, yeah, like..." or other non-words
    - ii. Ignore what's been said
    - iii. Attack or be aggressive
    - iv. Use opinions or hearsay
    - v. Interrupt your opponent or another speaker
    - vi. Lie
    - vii. Take up more time than you've been given
- III. Let's watch a few minutes of debate and see who does or doesn't follow these rules. Using the handout, take notes and find at least one "Do" and one "Don't"
  - a. Sample 1: CNN Split screen on a topical issue
  - b. Sample 2: Morning Talk Show (The View)

- IV. How or why did the “Do’s” make an argument effective? How or why did the “Don’ts” hurt the argument? Discussion in round table – demonstrating polite debate
- V. Logical Fallacies. I will give you an example of a logical fallacy and you tell me what the debater is doing wrong or how the debater is twisting the truth.
  - a. Strawman: I support Student Council = You are a fascist!
  - b. Appeal to emotion: Aww....
  - c. Appeal to nature: We need to drink more bottled water
  - d. Slippery slope: First we give them candy, before you know it...
  - e. Ad hominem: Joe used the bathroom and didn’t wash his hands so he must be wrong
  - f. Loaded question: What do you like better, guns or knives?
  - g. Bandwagon: Facebook is the best way to keep in touch
  - h. Black or White: If you’re not for me, you’re against me
- VI. Bring up [yourlogicalfallacyis.com](http://yourlogicalfallacyis.com)
  - a. Let’s look at some more samples and spot the fallacies:
    - i. Sample 1: Recent Presidential Debate
    - ii. Sample 4: ForAndAgainst.com
- VII. What fallacies did you find? Partner share, then group discussion
- VIII. Any questions???
- IX. Discuss Assignment

## Group Debate Assignment

I will put you in groups of 4. Before class is over, we will vote on the following debate topics or any that you brainstorm. Remember, we need a pro AND a con debate team.

- ✓ College Education should be free
- ✓ Cosmetic surgery should be banned
- ✓ The internet should be censored
- ✓ Illegal downloads should be criminalized
- ✓ All parents to be should attend parenting classes
- ✓ Alcohol should be illegal
- ✓ Gambling should be illegal
- ✓ Beauty contests should be banned

Once we assign topics, you will work with your group to develop your stance. Each group will work together electronically to complete the following:

1. Form 4 key points for your argument with evidence (newspaper, internet research, interviews, etc., you must use credible sources)
2. Pick out 4 counterpoints to your argument and decide as a group how you will respond
3. Organize your team by giving someone the lead role. The lead debater will introduce their group and start the debate. The rest of the group will come up with 4 debate questions that the lead will use to get things started.

The Group Debates will last 15 minutes per topic. Each group will have thirty seconds (max) to either ask or respond to a question. I will keep track of time and will bring a sound signal. Once the signal goes off, you can't continue speaking.

Each student must participate (speak) to earn credit. One student must also bring an extra paper copy of the group's point/counterpoint/questionnaire debate plan.

If you have questions about your role, what is due or when, please ask! During debate, I am a member of the audience.