

Parts of a Debate

In this tutorial you will learn the different components of a debate: opening statements, rebuttals, counterargument Q and As and closing statements.



Opening Statements



Organization

- It must have an intro, body, and conclusion
- Try to think of a slogan to tie everything together

Argument type

- The opening statement should use logic, have information from experts (no personal stories), and have citations on where your information is coming from.
- All of your facts and statistics should be represented in this part of the debate

Word Choice

- Persuasive Word Choice
- Quotes, academic language, interviews and strong sources

Length

- This should be at least 3 minutes in length

Rebuttal Section



Organization

- 4-step process
- Always relate it back to your topic

Delivery

- Must follow four steps
- You must be a quick thinker

Scoring

- Remember to look at the rubric!
- You must speak for 3 minutes
- Don't ramble or get lost

The 4-Step Rebuttal



1. They Say

You repeat what the other team said

Practice shortening the quote from the other team

2. But

Your transition word (you could use something other than but like “however” for example)

You clearly state your counter argument here. “But I disagree...”

3. Because

This is your reasoning

It can be support for your counterargument or it could be a criticism of your opponents idea

4. Therefore

You compare your opinion to your opponents and discuss why yours defeats theirs

This is a critical skill for debate

Your argument could be: better reasoned, better evidenced, has more importance or experience

Counterargument Q and A



Organization

- Your classmates (both the audience and the other team) will ask you questions about your topic.

Preparation

- You should speak to your teammates and ask what their arguments are. Then think about what questions people could ask about these topics.
- Write down answers and backup information on a paper to bring up with you.

Length

- This should be at least 3 minutes in length.
- The strongest speaker of the group should deliver this part of the debate

Closing Statement



Organization

- Must include an intro, a body, and conclusion
- If you used a slogan in the opening statement you should repeat it here
- Repeat any of your most important facts and statistics from the opening statement, but DO NOT introduce anything new.
- There are no rebuttals allowed in this section.

Argument

- You should be using the emotional argument here.
- This is the last the audience will hear from your side so make it count!

Length

- This should be at least 3 minutes in length.