

Lesson Blueprints: Debate Lesson

Lesson Title: Tag Team Debate

Grade Level: Middle and High School

Essential Question:

How do we work as a team to support and defend a position?

Objectives:

Students will...

1. Work with their team to develop an argument to support their stance on an issue.
2. Take notes on the opposing side's views and develop a rebuttal argument.

Materials:

- A teacher generated list of 2-3 statements based on a topic being covered in class (incorporating current events is encouraged)
- Paper and pencils for student note-taking
- Timer

Teacher:

1. Present the list of statements to the class and conduct a poll to determine how many students are in support of or against each statement. Record those numbers to be used at the end of the debate.
2. Have students think about which statement they would like to argue in support of or against. Each student will be put into a group to argue one of the sides of one of the statements.
3. If numbers are generally even for who wants to argue each side of each statement, divide the students into groups. If they are uneven, assign students to their teams to argue each side of each statement so that groups are about the same size. Do not have students get into their groups yet.
4. Explain the rules of the debate:
 - Teams have five (5) minutes to argue for their side of the statement in front of the whole class. They must speak for the full time period. During those five minutes, each student may only talk for one minute. Before their minute runs up, they must "tag" a new group member to continue the argument. The team continues to "tag" other group members until the five minutes runs up. Group members cannot speak again until everyone else on their team has spoken. While the first team is presenting their argument, the opposing side should take notes that can be used to develop their rebuttal.
 - After the first team has presented their argument for five minutes, the opposing team has five minutes to present their side. The same rules apply: they must speak for the full time period. Each group member may only speak for one minute before they have to "tag" a new group member to continue the argument. Group members cannot speak again until everyone else on their team has spoken. During this time, the first team should take notes that can be used to develop their rebuttal.
 - Once the second team's five minutes are up, both teams will have two minutes to develop a rebuttal argument. Each team's rebuttal argument should be in response to their opposing team's argument. Each team will have two minutes to present their rebuttal.

5. For the next 2-3 minutes, students should work individually to brainstorm a list of ideas that supports their side of the argument and/or come up with ways to refute the other side's stance
6. When time is up, students get into their groups and discuss their brainstormed lists to develop their team's argument to support their stance.
7. After a few minutes, have the class come back together and start the debate with the supporting side of the first statement. During this time, students should actively and respectfully listen to their classmates.
8. As the teacher, you should mediate the debate and time each team as they present their argument. Repeat instructions before each team presents so all group members are clear on the expectations.

Conclusion:

Once both sides of each statement have presented their initial argument and rebuttal arguments, conduct another class poll on each statement. Discuss with the class: Did anyone's stance change after you listened to each group present its argument? Why or why not? Were you more confident in your stance on a particular statement after listening to anyone's argument? Why or why not? How did your team work to support and defend your position?

Debate: Tag Team Rubric

Student: _____

Groups should be evaluated together for all categories EXCEPT participation. Each student should be evaluated individually based on his/her participation in the debate.

	4	3	2	1	
CATEGORY	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Approaching Expectations	Below Expectations	Score
Organization and Clarity	Argument was completely clear and orderly throughout presentation.	Ideas were mostly clear and orderly throughout presentation.	Ideas were clear in some parts but not overall.	Ideas were unclear throughout entire presentation.	
Use of Arguments	All reasons given were relevant.	Most reasons given were relevant.	Some relevant reasons were given.	Few or no relevant reasons given.	
Use of Examples and Facts	Many relevant and supportive examples and facts given.	Many examples and facts were given: mostly relevant and supportive.	Some examples and facts given: some relevant and supportive.	Few or no relevant, supportive examples and facts.	
Rebuttal	Many effective counter-arguments made.	Some effective counter-arguments made.	Few effective counter-arguments made.	No effective counter-arguments made.	
Rule Following	Spoke for 5 minutes, no group members went over their 1-minute time allocation.	Missed one of two requirements: 1) Did not speak for 5 minutes 2) 1 or more group members went over their 1-minute time allocation.	Missed both requirements: 1) Did not speak for 5 minutes 2) 1 or more group members went over their 1-minute time allocation.	Made no attempt to follow debate rules and guidelines.	
Participation	Student spoke during either initial argument OR rebuttal. Worked well with group members to develop arguments and shared speaking time well.	Student spoke during either initial argument OR rebuttal. Worked somewhat well with group members to develop arguments and shared speaking time somewhat well.	Student did not speak during either argument but worked well with group members to develop arguments.	Student did not speak during either argument and did not work well with group members to develop arguments.	
					Total