



## Teacher Debate Guide

This guide will help you plan and prepare a classroom debate. Choose from the Motions available and print a copy of the corresponding Research Handout and a copy of the Debate Worksheet for each member of your class. You will also need to hand out note-cards to each team. Alternatively use your own Motion and get your class to research from scratch. You may need to be the Chair *and* the Floor if use the whole class as both teams, but you could divide the class in four and have two separate, or related, debates. Then you can use the non-debating half of the class as the Floor. (Hopefully this will encourage the teams to take their own debate more seriously!) Alternatively you could 'book' a big space in the school and invite another class to be the Floor.

### The Debate

The debate will consist of four rounds. The suggested numbers of team members for each round should be used as a guide as class size will differ between Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 and depends how you decide to divide the class. For smaller classes, members should take on multiple roles.

#### Round 1

##### **Opening Statement – proposition then opposition**

The Captain defines the Motion and briefly summarises why their team is arguing for or against the Motion. (1 team member)

#### Round 2

##### **Main Arguments – proposition then opposition**

Team members present their main arguments either for or against the Motion. (2 to 4 team members).

#### Round 3

##### **Cross-Examination – opposition asks proposition questions first**

The teams now have a chance to question each other. (3 to 8 team members)

#### Round 4

##### **Closing Statement – opposition then proposition**

The teams sum up their arguments, what they have achieved in the debate and they appeal to the Floor, explaining why they should vote for their side of the argument. (2 to 3 team members).

#### The Vote

You can just have a show of hands, or if there's time, a secret ballot is very grown up, or the house could divide into two destinations to be counted like the House of Commons.

### Preparation – 15 minutes

Spend the last 15 minutes of a lesson preparing for the debate:

- Each pupil should be given a Debate Worksheet and a Research Handout.
- Assign five minutes reading time for students to familiarise themselves with the debate process and the debate topic.
- Pick the debate teams by dividing the class in half. Decide which team will propose the Motion and which team will oppose the Motion. Choose a Captain for each team.
- Allow five minutes for team members to discuss and choose which part of the debate they will be responsible for, and to fill in that part of the Debate Worksheet.





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### Homework

All students should re-read the Debate Worksheet and Research Handout to be certain of what's expected of them during the debate. Students should also bring one piece of research from the internet, book, magazine or newspaper with them to the next lesson. This piece of research should help build their argument.

### Research – first half of lesson (25-30 minutes)

Students research their argument using the Internet. They will need their Research Handout.

### Written Preparation – second half of lesson (25-30 minutes)

Split the class into the two teams. As a group, each team should now use their research to work through the Research Section on the Debate Worksheet, making sure all members write down the same information for each section. Students will need note-cards for this section.

### Homework

All students should read through their completed Debate Worksheets in preparation for the debate.

### Debate Preparation – first half of lesson (20-30 minutes)

Split the class into the two teams. Team members should work orally through the debate, and make any last minute amendments.

### The Debate – second half of lesson (20-40 minutes)

As Chair, your role during the debate is to oversee the debate as a whole. You will need to make sure the debate follows the proposed outline and that students remain quiet whilst team members are presenting their arguments. You should also make sure that speeches do not go on for too long and that the same arguments aren't repeated over and over again.

### The Winning Team

You could either invite another class to watch the debate and to vote on which team put forward the better argument, or you could also play the role of Floor and choose the winning debate team.





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## Web Links

### Debate lesson plans

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_lesson/lesson/lesson304.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson304.shtml)

### Set up a debating society

<http://www.walesdebate.org.uk/>

### Debate theatre company

[http://www.nist.gov/public\\_affairs/Posters/ytouring.htm](http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/Posters/ytouring.htm)

### Evaluating debate performance

[http://www.lalc.k12.ca.us/uclasp/issues/bringing\\_water/rubric.htm](http://www.lalc.k12.ca.us/uclasp/issues/bringing_water/rubric.htm)

### Debate topic resources

<http://www.gmpublicdebate.org.uk/>

<http://www.spiked-online.com/>

<http://www.scpub.org/resources/topics.asp>

[http://syacd.co.uk/can\\_we\\_should\\_we/startfil/home.htm](http://syacd.co.uk/can_we_should_we/startfil/home.htm)

<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/en/1/pinpubactedurespub.html>

