

Template 5

Debate

The attached activity guides¹ and documents (excerpted from a longer project) provide a model of how to do an extended debate project with your students in any content area class. Debate projects provide excellent mechanisms for teaching not only presentation, reading, writing and research skills, but collaborative skills as well, as they allow for natural and authentic purposes for collaboration. Most of the sample activity guides come from a debate project around the positive/negative impact of Imperialism, but they can be adapted for debates on any controversial issue. While this is an extended debate project that asks students to do some original research as well as look at documents provided by the teacher, you can shorten (and simplify) it by providing students with all of the documents/texts they need to look at and by not asking them to do some of the debate skill activities such as practice in refuting arguments. Also provided are some “quick and dirty” suggestions for how to do 1-2 period debates on familiar topics to prepare for a larger debate project or as a stand alone activity.

Some Points to Consider:

1) Teach Content Before, During, and After

Students will be learning content through doing the work of the project. The debate does not need to come after they have learned the content; the debate is how they will learn it! Before they begin the work on the debate, they should start with some background in order to feel like they have a starting place and the necessary context for understanding the issues at hand. Mostly, however, they will learn the content of the topic through the process of developing their arguments and collaborating with their group members on their arguments.

2) Students need to have a firm foundation in many of the basics of debates.

Do not take for granted that students have developed some of the necessary skills they need in order to do debates. Debate projects provide a wonderful and authentic opportunity to develop students' skills in important areas such as determining how to: use evidence to support an argument, decide whether evidence supports, refutes, or is irrelevant to a point, create a logical and coherent argument, anticipate opposing arguments and how to refute them convincingly, use persuasive language, and many other skills

¹ From Daria Witt, BkIHS

crucial for all disciplines and the real world. The activity guides in this template provide examples of how to help students develop these skills, first using content that may be more familiar to them (in this example immigration) before delving into the content of Imperialism.

3) Provide meaningful roles to all students.

Whole class debates, in which there are large teams debating an issue in an unstructured way, usually result in the most confident students speaking and those who are unsure of the content or of their debating skills fading into the background. It is more effective to organize students into small groups (3-4 students) in which each student is responsible for at least one argument and/or the opening and closing statements. This means that you probably need to develop several debate questions for your class. (In the example provided, two groups debated the pros and cons of the benefits of imperialism in India; the other two groups debated the pros and cons of Imperialism in the Congo.)

4) Scaffold, Scaffold, Scaffold

Debates provide a wonderful opportunity for natural differentiation. While one student on a team might develop a complex and long argument with many pieces of evidence, a student new to English with little prior schooling may only be able to develop a simple argument with two pieces of evidence. Both students will be pushed beyond their current comfort zone and academic level, but the results will look very different. Opening statements and closing statements especially require the highest orders of thinking, as students need to synthesize the arguments of all of their team members and provide the relevant context on the topic. Debates are difficult and most students will need significant scaffolding to produce a coherent and logical argument. In the attached template, students are guided through the process of finding evidence, matching evidence to arguments, and using persuasive language to be able to construct their argument. It is best to provide some graphic organizers and fill in the blank paragraphs for students who need them. The more advanced students can develop their arguments without these scaffolds.

5) Provide Research Folders

If you have several groups, each with a different topic, a great way to make sure that everyone has enough material to research is by having table folders. If you do not have access to a computer lab, or if your students struggle with finding materials that are relevant to their topic and accessible to them, having folders will facilitate the research process. Once you know the topics of each group, you do some Internet research to find a variety of materials at different levels, print it out and put it in a folder. This acts as a library for students that they can use to find information to construct their

arguments. This is particularly helpful if you want to limit the time of the project or you have students new to doing their own research.

6) Provide students with listening guides and a follow up assignment when they are listening to other teams' debates.

It is important to provide students with guidance on how to listen to the debates of their fellow groups and require them to apply that information in a new context. In this example, students who debated the pros and cons of imperialism in India had to make note of the arguments that the two teams debating the pros and cons of imperialism in the Congo were making. They then had to write a paragraph or essay on the benefits or harm of Imperialism in the Congo (depending on which arguments they found more convincing).

7) Provide a model for students of the type of writing you want them to be doing.

In the attached template, the teacher uses a familiar topic, capitalism (previous unit of study) to show an example of an opening statement and argument for a team arguing that the capitalist system is more beneficial than it is harmful. Because of the similarity in topics, there are many of the same phrases and vocabulary words used in the model that students can imitate in their own writing and argument construction while still requiring them to come up with their own arguments and evidence. Have students read the models closely (in the attached activity, students have to underline words of persuasion and analyze the main arguments and evidence).

Activity on Controversies

In order to improve our understanding of what a controversy is, today you will be working in your groups to bring together your knowledge of the different controversies you have been reading about over the past few weeks in Lara's class. You will begin with one piece of chart paper that has a general issue written on it. You will have 3 minutes to come up with as many controversies related to that issue that your group can think of. At the end of the three minutes, your group will be given another piece of paper with a different issue on it and you will again come up with as many controversies as you can. This is a competition (and there will be a small prize). Here are the rules:

- Each group gets 3 minutes to write down as many controversies as they can think of about that particular issue. At the end of three minutes, one person from each group goes to the table to their left to pick up the paper and the next round starts.
- Choose one person to write down the group's ideas;
- Write in one color marker (the color your group has been given);
- Write each controversy in the form of a question, showing clearly what the controversy is: (e.g. Should smoking be allowed in public places?);
- Do not write the same controversy (even if you are using different words) that another group has written.
- Pass the paper along at the end of three minutes so you can get the next paper (you will have one minute at the end to add any last items)
- Once every group has had a chance to write on every paper, students will have one minute to add (in their color pen) to any of the issues they can think of a controversy about (that has not already been written down).
- Then, we will go through each controversy written to see which ones are valid and which ones are not. The group who has written the highest number of valid controversies (as indicated by their color marker) will win.

Judging the Validity of Arguments

When you are debating it is important to think about several things in order to make sure your arguments are strong and that you are in the best position to weaken your opponents' arguments:

- Do the conclusions I am drawing from the information make sense?
- What assumptions is my opponent making in the arguments he is giving?
Are those assumptions valid? What evidence would best show those assumptions to be incorrect?
- What evidence can I find that will strengthen my arguments?
- Is the evidence my opponent using relevant to the arguments he is making?

Look at the following arguments and answer the multiple-choice questions below.

Argument I

Strict gun control laws cause a decrease in violent crime; since the city council passed a gun control law, armed robberies in City X have dropped by 18 percent.

1. Which one of the following statements is NOT a valid (legitimate, correct, reasonable) objection to the above argument?
 - a) A decrease in crime in one city does not mean that other cities would also have a decrease in crime if the same gun control law were enacted.
 - b) Other factors may have caused the drop in arm robberies.
 - c) Armed robbery is only one type of violent crime that might be affected by a gun control law.
 - d) The gun control law has made it more difficult for citizens to purchase guns for self-defense.
 - e) Since the law was passed, murders involving guns in City X have increased by 22 percent.
2. Which of the following statements, if true, would weaken the argument above?
 - I. In the six months since the law was passed, 40 percent more police have been hired.
 - II. In the six months since the law was passed, accidental deaths by firearms have increased by 10 percent.
 - III. Only 30 percent of those indicted (charged) under the new law have been convicted.
 - a) I only
 - b) III only
 - c) I and II only
 - d) I and III only
 - e) II and III only

Argument II

A recent study of cigarette smokers has shown that of cancer patients who are heavy smokers of unfiltered cigarettes, 40 percent will die of the disease. For cancer patients who are light smokers of filter cigarettes, the percentage is 25 percent.

1. Which one of the following conclusions can be made from the information above?
 - a) There are more heavy smokers of unfiltered cigarettes than light smokers of filter cigarettes.
 - b) More heavy smokers of unfiltered cigarettes die of cancer than light smokers of filter cigarettes.
 - c) A heavy smoker of unfiltered cigarettes who has cancer is more likely to die than light smokers of unfiltered cigarettes.
 - d) A heavy smoker of unfiltered cigarettes who has cancer may be more likely to die than a light smoker of unfiltered cigarettes.
 - e) A heavy smoker of unfiltered cigarettes who has cancer is more likely to die than a light smoker of filtered cigarettes who has cancer.

Argument 3

Statistics show that, on the average, women executives' salaries are about 20% lower than the salaries of men in comparable jobs. This is true in spite of the job discrimination lawsuits that have been filed by the U.S. government against firms such as A.T. & T. and the Bank of America in the early 1970s, as well as the passage of laws forbidding job discrimination by gender in many states and cities. In the face of this continuing prejudice against women, it is clear that only an amendment to the US. Constitution can fully remedy (fix) the inequalities that exist in the labor system today.

1. Which of the following does the author of the above argument assume?
 - a) All women executives are more qualified than their male counterparts.
 - b) A constitutional amendment is more likely to influence employment practices than separate state laws and court actions.
 - c) Legal remedies for discrimination can be effective only when they are put together with a sincere wish to fix the system.
 - d) Average salaries are often misleading as indicators of the real status of a social group.
 - e) Discrimination against women is as serious and widespread as discrimination against members of racial and ethnic minorities.

2. What are some of the weaknesses of the argument above?

Immigration Debate

Controversial Statement: Immigrants benefit the United States.

Directions: Look at the following list of arguments. Then with your group, come to consensus about whether the argument supports (pro), refutes (Con), or is not related to (irrelevant) the controversial statement listed above by putting a check in the appropriate box.

Argument	Pro	Con	Irrelevant
1. The diversity of immigrants adds to the culture of the United States because it makes the country a more interesting place to live in.			
2. Immigrants benefit the economy of the United States.			
3. We should build a bigger wall on the border to keep immigrants out.			
4. Immigrants take jobs from U.S. citizens.			
5. Immigrants create jobs for U.S. citizens by establishing businesses.			
6. Immigrants should be allowed to vote.			

Connecting Evidence and Arguments

Directions: Look at the evidence below. Figure out which arguments each piece of evidence supports and which arguments each piece refutes. Write the number of the arguments in the space provided. Note: If a piece of evidence does not support or refute on argument, write “none”.

Argument 1: The diversity of immigrants adds to the culture of the United States because it makes the country a more interesting place to live in.

Argument 2: Immigrants benefit the economy of the United States.

Argument 3: Immigrants create jobs for U.S. citizens by establishing businesses.

Argument 4: Immigrants take jobs from U.S. citizens.

Argument 5: Immigrants contribute to an increase in crime in the United States.

Evidence	What argument does it support?	What argument does it refute?
<u>Example:</u> According to the study by the Urban Institute and one by the Council of Economic Advisors, immigrants pay more in taxes than the money they receive in services.	2	none
1. According to the ACLU Immigrant’s Rights Project report, many studies have found that immigrants actually create more jobs than they fill. Immigrants create many of their own business that hires both immigrants and citizens.		
2. A study by the University of California Immigrants Rights Project found that Mexican immigration to Los Angeles County between 1970 and 1980 was responsible for 78,000 new jobs.		
3. According to the Midwest Coalition to Reform Immigration, low paid immigrants have decreased salaries of American workers. Adjusted for inflation, wages for American workers have declined over the past 20 years.		
4. According to the finding of a study conducted by the Urban Institute, the average immigrant pays \$80,000 more in taxes than they will receive in local, state, and federal benefits over their lifetimes.		
5. According to the National Immigration Forum, there is no evidence that states or cities with high immigrant populations perform worse economically than those with low immigrant populations. In fact, the opposite is true.		
6. Several major companies were started by immigrants (Intel, Sun Microsystems, Computer Associates and many others). These companies employ thousands and thousands of immigrants and American citizens.		
7. The immigrant communities in cities make cities interesting places. Tourist love to visit areas such as Chinatown and the Barrio in New York City.		

Challenge Activity

Finding Evidence to Support Arguments

Directions: Now take a look at the arguments listed on the previous page for which you were not able to find any evidence. Choose one and explain what type of evidence would be needed to find support for or to refute it.

Argument	Evidence needed to support	Evidence Needed to Refute

Using Documents to Make Arguments for and Against Imperialism in India

The following documents provide arguments both for and against imperialism in India. Look at each document, decide whether it supports imperialism ("pro") or "goes against imperialism ("con"). Then summarize the argument the document makes for or against imperialism and the lens that that argument belongs to. Use the table below.

Pro Arguments for Imperialism

Document Number	Summary of Argument	Lens of Argument

Con Arguments against Imperialism

Document Number	Summary of Argument	Lens of Argument

Using Note Cards to Take Notes

As you research your topic for the debate, it will be useful for you to take notes on note cards. Use the following format:

Key word for argument:	Source: (or source # if you have numbered bibliography cards)
Quotation, paraphrase or summary of information that is relevant to your argument.	
Page #:	

Look at the following example of a notecard preparing for a debate about the benefits of immigration.

Argument: Economic benefits	Source: Urban Institute
<i>According to a 2001 study by the Urban Institute immigrants pay \$80,000 more in taxes than they will receive in local, state, and federal benefits over their lifetimes.</i>	
Page #: www.urbaninstitute.org/immigration/benefits	

Keep the following in mind as you take notes:

1. Make sure that the summaries or paraphrases you write keep the meaning of the original text.
2. Be accurate. If you are writing down a quotation from an authority, make sure you write down every word correctly with capitalization, punctuation, and grammar exactly the same as the original. Be sure to begin and end with quotation marks and write who said it.
3. If you are writing down a statistic, quote the statistic exactly as it was written – even a slight change of words can change the whole meaning of the statistic.
4. Do not write more than one fact per index card.

Internet Research Guide

The internet is a great place to look for up-to-date information but you need to make sure that your source is a reliable one. As you look for information follow the following steps.

1. Use a search engine to find information on your topic. You can use a search engine by following its links through a series of directories or you can search for information on your topic by entering key words and asking the search engine to look for those key words.

(see a list of directories on the opposite page)

2. Choose from a list of possible pages by reading the description of each and then linking to pages which may relate to your working thesis.

3. Skim the page. Is it written at an appropriate level for high school research? Do you understand it? Does it contain information that you can use in your paper?

4. Evaluate the source.

1. Who is the author and administrator?

2. Who controls the website? What is its purpose?

3. When was it last updated?

4. What is the URL?

-Remember that .org (organization), .edu (education), and .gov (government); are usually more reliable than a .com (commercial).

5. If you cannot find any of the above information about a source it is probably not reliable.

6. If you have decided that a source is reliable enough for you to use, write down as much information as you can about the source.

7. If it is not too long, print out your page so you can take notes from it. If the page is very long, choose the sections that you need, highlight them, and print out only those parts.

Website Evaluation Sheet

Answer the following questions about each website you find in order to check and see if it is a reliable source. Then, decide whether it is -- reliable or not.

1. Who is the author and administrator of the site?

2. Who controls the website? What is its purpose?

3. When was it last updated?

4. What is the URL?

5. Is this a reliable source? Why or why not?

Debate Plan

Please write in the chart below which argument each person on your team plans to work on. Be specific.

Topic: _____
 Pro/Con (circle one)

Name of Team Member	Part of debate person will work on	Write at least two pieces of evidence you plan to use to support your argument
	Opening Statement	(In the opening statement you don't need to present actual evidence, but you should mention here some of the main points you plan to make)
	Argument 1 (explain what it is)	1. 2.
	Argument 2 (explain what it is)	1. 2.
	Argument 3 (explain what it is)	1. 2.

What will your visual aid (chart, graph, picture, etc.)? You should have at least one visual aid to emphasize one of the points you are making in your arguments. If possible use more than one visual aid since a good picture is worth a thousand words.

Who will work on the visual aid?

Useful Phrases and Vocabulary for Debates

To persuade

I urge you to
I persuade you to
I encourage you to
The evidence demonstrates that
The evidence reveals that
The evidence shows that
In light of the evidence
After examining the evidence, you will find
This point is corroborated by the evidence showing

To argue against your opponent

The evidence refutes my opponent's argument	The evidence negates my opponent's point
I disagree	I challenge my opponent's assumption
In contrast to my opponent's argument	Although
The evidence belies my opponent's Argument	Even though
My opponent's argument is contradicted by the evidence showing	In contrast to
The evidence contradicts my opponents' point because	As opposed to
	On the other hand
	While
	On my contrary

To add argument to emphasize your point

In addition
Furthermore
Moreover
Also
Another reason
An additional piece of evidence
It is also important to consider
Besides
Additionally
What is more

Vocabulary for Debates

Controversial	Support	Support
Controversy	Oppose	Confirm
Contradict	Advantages	Corroborate
Challenge	Disadvantages	Substantiate
Evidence	Benefit	Prove
Consider	Refute	Disprove

Sample Opening Statement and Argument for the debate:
Which is the best economic system for a country to adopt capitalism or communism?

Sample Opening Statement for Capitalism

One of the most important effects of the Industrial Revolution that occurred first in England in the 18th century and led other parts of the world to modernize over the next two centuries was the economic system of Capitalism. This economic system, which grew out of the need to encourage investment and protect the interests of the businesses that are developing during the industrial era, was built on the ideas of Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus. These economists advocated the main ideas of capitalism, which were that government should not interfere in business ("Laissez-faire") and that prices should be determined by supply and demand and competition. Capitalism led countries such as Great Britain, the United States, France, Germany, and many others to become extremely rich and powerful. It is clearly the superior economic system. Most countries today recognize this and have adopted capitalism because they too want to become as advanced and as powerful as these other countries. In contrast to communism, which has always led the government to become a dictatorship, capitalism seems to go hand in hand with democracy and freedom. **Evidence from 150 years of history clearly shows that capitalism is the superior economic system because it encourages entrepreneurship and hard work, leads countries to get richer, and it does not limit personal freedoms.**

Argument 1 for Capitalism

Capitalism encourages entrepreneurship and hard work more than any other economic system. Under capitalism, people know that they have the freedom to make as much money and profit as they are capable of making. Therefore, they are more likely to work hard to achieve their highest potential. Inventions that have helped mankind such as computers, electricity, medicines, and others have almost all come out of capitalist countries. These inventions not only helped the inventor to get rich, but also led to tremendous social benefits such as schools getting better, medical care improving, people staying warmer and cleaner drinking water. In a communist country, on the other hand, a person who works 12 hours a day is going to earn the same as a person who works 8 hours a day. Similarly, a person who creates a wonderful and exciting invention isn't going to profit from it. Communism, therefore, takes away people's motivation to work hard to benefit themselves and their country. An additional piece of evidence to consider is that hard working immigrants with a dream flock in large numbers to the most capitalist country of all: the United States. Why? Because they know that this is a country where they can achieve their dreams. This possibility is enabled by capitalism and the freedom that it gives for anyone to "make it" in society. If a country wants to ensure that its people will work to their full potential and produce the maximum economic and social benefits for society, it should definitely adapt the economic system proven to work: capitalism.

Argument I predict my opponent will make:

Capitalism enables many people to become rich, but it also leads many people to impoverishment. It is therefore an unfair system because it does not protect all people. It is the responsibility of government to make sure that all people are provided for and have enough to live off of.

Rebuttal I can make to my opponent's argument:

Communism doesn't help the poor. It makes them dependent on government and does not help them to become independent people able to support themselves. Moreover, capitalism helps make the economy of a country stronger so that country can improve education and put more programs in place to help train unskilled workers to become more skilled. More money in the economy also helps build more schools and more social service departments to help those in need.

Developing Your Debate Argument

Part 1: Group Exercise

Directions: Look at the sample “Opening Statement and Argument for the Debate” as well as the “Useful Phrases and Vocabulary for Debates. With your group, do the following:

1). Underline the useful phrases and vocabulary for debates that you see used in this document (in any of the paragraphs).

2). Decide on 1-2 that each person in your group would like to use and incorporate into your argument writing.

Name of Group Member	One debate phrase/vocabulary this person plans to use	Example of How This Phrase is Used in the Sample Argument

3. What is the thesis statement (main argument) for the team’s entire debate? Hint: this can be found in the opening statement.

4. Is the team in this sample in support of or in opposition to capitalism? _____

5. What are the three main arguments you predict this team will be making in this debate based on the main argument?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

7. Work with a partner in your group to develop your topic sentence (main argument) for your paragraph. You can use a phrase such as: “One _____ reason that imperialism benefited/harmed India _____
(your lens)
was _____.”

8. Once all group members have developed their individual topic sentences (with support from the person doing the opening statement), develop your group’s thesis statement (main argument summarizing all of the group’s arguments). You will probably want to put this statement at the end of your opening argument. It should provide some summary of everyone’s arguments (see the last sentence of the sample opening statement for Capitalism). You can begin with a phrase such as:

The evidence clearly demonstrates that.....
After examining the evidence, you will find that....
In light of the evidence.....

Main argument for our team: _____

Constructing Your Debate Argument

Directions: Use the debate vocabulary and phrases, the sample argument and the evidence you have collected, and the debate plan you have developed with your group to develop your individual argument for the debate.

1. Historical Lens of your argument (political, economic, cultural, etc.): _____
 2. Your main argument (topic sentence): _____
-

3. As a first step in developing your argument, fill in the blanks below. Then you should rewrite your paragraph on another piece of paper and change around the words to make it sound more like your own. Feel free to add other sentences, phrases, words to make your argument as convincing as possible. Remember that you need to include at least 2 different pieces of concrete evidence to support your argument (topic sentence).

Imperialism was beneficial/harmful to India for many _____
(circle one) (name of your lens)
reasons. One _____ reason was _____.
(lens)

This is demonstrated by the fact that _____

In addition, there was further positive/negative _____ impact
(your lens)
because of _____

You can see this through evidence showing _____

Finally, it is important to consider the evidence that _____

The evidence is clearly overwhelming that imperialism brought about significant harm/benefits
(circle one)
to India.

Peer Editing Your Paragraph (on arguments for or against Imperialism)

Directions: Switch papers with someone in your group. Read his/her paragraph from last night's homework (which should be the opening statement for or against imperialism). Then fill in the table to make sure all parts of the paragraph are clear.

Name of author _____ Name of editor _____

Items to check	Yes or No	If no, give details.
The topic sentence clearly states the main argument the person is making. This argument is a clear argument for or against Imperialism.		
The lens this argument belongs to is clear and it is different from other group members' lenses		
The argument is clear and is a strong argument for or against Imperialism. It is explained and supported with at least two clear pieces of evidence.		
At least three examples are given to support the argument.		
Grammar and punctuation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbs forms (verbs that should be in the past tense, verbs in 3rd person (he/she/it/ have an s at the end). • Punctuation (each sentence ends with a period and there are no run-on sentences). • Capitalization (each sentence begins with a capital letter. Names of people and countries and languages are capitalized). 		
At least 2 debate phrases/ words are used (refer to the list you were given)		

Peer Editing Your Paragraph (on opening statement for or against Imperialism)

Directions: Switch papers with someone in your group. Read his/her paragraph from last night's homework (which should be the opening statement for or against imperialism). Then fill in the table to make sure all parts of the paragraph are clear.

Name of author _____ Name of editor _____

Items to check	Yes or No	If no, give details.
The paragraph begins with a background about Imperialism in your region. It tells the most important facts (answering the questions: who? What? Where? When? Why?).		
It is clear from the tone of the whole paragraph which side the team is supporting.		
At least three reasons/ causes for Imperialism in this region are given.		
The paragraph ends with a thesis statement summarizing the main arguments that the group plans to make.		
Grammar and punctuation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbs forms (verbs that should be in the past tense, verbs in 3rd person (he/she/it/ have an s at the end). • Punctuation (each sentence ends with a period and there are no run-on sentences). • Capitalization (each sentence begins with a capital letter. Names of people and countries and languages are capitalized). 		
At least 2 debate phrases/ words are used (refer to the list you were given).		

Argument Practice

Name of Evaluator _____

Pro or Con? _____ Person doing argument? _____

Directions: Practice the argument and have your group members fill out this evaluation form to help you improve your presentation.

Criteria	Yes or No?	If no, explain
The argument uses persuasive language to convince the audience that your team is right.		
The speaker can be heard. The speaker looks at the audience at least sometimes.		
The argument is stated in the first sentence. The class will understand the argument.		
At least three pieces of evidence (reasons) are given.		

Imperialism Debate Sequence

Part I

1. Opening Statement – Pro Group 2 minutes
2. Opening Statement – Con Group 2 minutes

Part II

1. Argument 1: pro group 2 minutes
2. Argument 1: con group 2 minutes
3. Pro and con groups confer and prepare rebuttals on that argument; class goes over notes and prepares questions about that argument 2 minutes

Part III

1. Argument 2: pro group 2 minutes
2. Argument 2: con group 2 minutes
3. Pro and con groups confer and prepare rebuttals on that argument; class goes over notes and prepares questions about that argument 2 minutes

Part IV

1. Argument 3: pro group 2 minutes
2. Argument 3: con group 2 minutes
3. Pro and con groups confer and prepare rebuttals on that argument; class goes over notes and prepares questions about that argument 2 minutes

Part V

Repeat above steps for groups with five members.

Part VI – Rebuttal of arguments

1. Pro group refutes at least one argument that con group made
2. Con group refutes at least one argument pro group made

Part VII

Class asks questions of each side

Defending and Refuting Arguments

One of the most important debating skills is to be able to refute (prove wrong) your opponents' arguments effectively. In order to do so, you have to be able to predict what you think their arguments will be, and come to the debate armed with evidence you can use against them.

Directions: Use the table below to write down three arguments you and your group members predict your opponents will use to argue about whether imperialism was helpful or harmful to India. Then write down what you could say that would effectively refute their arguments. Be as specific as possible.

Opponents' Arguments We Predict	What we can say to refute/contradict those arguments

Name _____ Class _____

Notes On The Debate Con India

Directions: Listen carefully to the debate of classmates today and take notes so you can later write about what you learned.. Use this space to write down the main ideas from the opening statement, the main arguments each student is making, and at least one piece of evidence that student gives to support that argument.

Opening statement Name of Studet presenting:
Which country(ies) imperialized this region?
Why was there imperialism in this region? (Name two reasons.)

Name of student making the argument:	
Argument 1	Evidence to support Argument

Name of student making the argument:	
Argument 2	Evidence to support Argument

Name of student making the argument:	
Argument 3	Evidence to support Argument

Name of student making the argument:	
Argument 4	Evidence to support Argument

Group Evaluation of Debate Project

Please answer the following questions to evaluate how well your group worked together.

Name _____

Class _____

1. Do you think your team worked well together? Why/why not?

2. Write the name of each person in your group and explain how each person contributed to the team. Be as specific as possible. Then put the approximate percentage of how much work each team member did (note: if you are a group of four and everyone worked the same amount, the percentage would be 25%; for a group of 3 the percentage would be 33%).

Team Member Name	Contribution	Percentage of Work
1. Me		
2.		
3.		
4.		

3. What do you think your group could have done better to work as a team?

4. What did you like most about working with your group?

5. What did you like least (what was hardest) about working as a group?

6. What did you learn from doing this project?

Sample Debate Reflection

Write a brief (1-2 pages) reflection on your own debate that answers most of the following questions (in any order).

- What was most difficult?
- What was enjoyable/not enjoyable?
- What did you learn from the process (both the content of the debate topic and the process of doing the debate)?
- What do you think you could have done better?
- What was most useful to you in preparing for the debate?
- How did doing research and participating in the debate influence your feelings about the controversy? Did you switch positions through the course of the debate?
- Did you find your opponents' arguments convincing? Why/ or why not? Which arguments were particularly convincing or unconvincing? Were there any arguments your opponents gave that you did not expect?

Different (less time consuming) Ways to do Debates in the Classroom² (Alternative 2)

1. Model for students the difference between a regular argument and a counterargument.

An argument is just bringing the other side without addressing the argument made by your opponent. A counterargument directly addresses the argument made by the other side. An example I give the students, is if they are trying to make a counterargument to their parents as to why they should be allowed to their friend's party on Friday night.

Mom: Freddy, I don't want you to go to your friend's party because it gets dangerous at night to go out.

Regular Argument -- Mom, all my friends are going and if I don't go they will make fun of me.

Possible Counterargument Freddy Can Make: Mom, I will be going with a large number of friends so you don't have to worry about something happening to me.

2. **Whole Class Debate**---Pick a Controversial Issue that can be argued from both sides (e.g. Is Technology a blessing or curse?) Divide the students into two sides (pro and con). Have a reward for the side that wins the debate (Extra pts, candy, etc). Give students time in groups or on their own to come up with arguments for their side (from a reading -see some sample handouts and role plays). Let students know that if they have time they should also read the other side—and brainstorm counterarguments against possible arguments posed by the other side. Debate as a whole class, going back and forth between the 2 sides. A regular argument gets the group 1 point and a counterargument gets 2 points for your side. At the end of debate tally up the points to see who won.
3. **One on One Debate on Paper** --- Teacher should match students with similar ability level and/or pair up a student with someone he/she would be excited and motivated to beat. After reading their side of the debate, one student will

² Provided by Ed Liu, BxIHS.

start by writing his/her name followed by the first argument supporting their side (e.g. George: Technology is a curse because it makes people lazy.). The other student will write a regular argument for his/her side (i.e. Judy: Technology is a blessing because we can do things much quicker.). At this point, George can now come up with a counterargument to address Judy's 1st argument followed by Judy writing down her counterargument or argument in response to George's response. So every pair of students' papers will look like this:

Debate on Technology

George: "-----"

Judy: "-----"

George: "-----"

Judy: "-----"

George: "-----"

Judy: "-----"

Essentially the students in pairs are debating one on one on paper. This debate format really motivates the students and it is an activity in which all students have to participate. As in the whole class debate, an argument is worth one point and a counterargument is worth 2 points. As a teacher you will know which student is able to make a counterargument.

4. A deviation from the one on one debate on paper is the 2 on 2 debate on a large poster paper. In pairs, partners can help each other make counterarguments.
5. You can also have students come up and in front of the class for an oral debate after each side has prepared. Whoever makes the counterargument first wins a point for their side.

Debate Alternative #3

Academic Controversies³

Academic Controversies are a collaborative process in which students research and assume different positions on a controversial topic in order to understand an issue from various perspectives. They consist of students taking the following steps:

1. **Research and prepare a position.** Students are divided into pairs. Each pair develops the position assigned, learns the relevant information, and prepares to present the case to the other pair.
2. **Present and advocate their position.** Each pair presents their position to the other pair (both members must participate). The opposing pair takes notes and asks clarification questions.
3. **Refute opposing positions and rebut attacks.** Students argue for their own position, presenting as many facts as possible. They refute the arguments of the opposing pair. Following a set of rules to help them criticize ideas without criticizing people, they discuss the issue and evaluate the evidence that has been presented to support both positions.
4. **Reverse perspectives.** The pairs reverse perspectives and present each other's positions. When they argue the opposing position, they add information that the opposing pair had left out.
5. **Synthesize the best evidence and reasoning into a joint position.** Pairs no longer act in opposition but integrate what they know into a joint position paper on which all sides agree. The group presents their conclusions to the class (all 4 members must participate). Students may be assessed individually on their knowledge of the topic and they engage in a processing of how their group functioned and how it could function better.

³ Adapted from Johnson, D.W., Johnson R.T., Holubec, E.J. (1994) *The New Circles of Learning: Cooperation in the Classroom and School*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development