

Learning and Teaching Resources for Learning English through Debating

The resources presented here are meant to be examples to show the types of activities/materials that can be designed and developed to help students to work on the various focuses of the module in the *Suggested Schemes of Work for the Elective Part of the Three-year Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum (Secondary 4-6) (2007)* (hereafter referred to as “SoWs”). Teachers are encouraged to adapt, modify and develop their own resources or make use of other relevant materials to suit the needs and interests of their students.

Part 1: Introduction

Lessons 4-6: Eliciting, confirming and establishing knowledge about debating
(please refer to SoWs pp.74-75)

A. The two sides in a debate

In this part, you will learn the specific roles of each speaker in a debate, and how they come together to fulfil the team’s job.

Proposition and opposition

Every debate has two sides. The side which argues for the motion is known as the “Proposition” (also referred to as “Government” or “Affirmative”). The side which argues against the motion is known as the “Opposition” (or “Negative”).

Overall team responsibility

Debating is about team performance. The team as a whole needs to convince the audience that they are right and that the other team is wrong. Speakers on a team must work together effectively to present arguments and examples that support the team’s stance, and rebut the opposing team’s arguments to the greatest effect.

Individual speakers’ roles

Most debates take place between two teams of three speakers. The team’s work is broken down among the speakers, each of whom has a different job to do, defined by the position they are speaking in during the debate. The three speakers’ roles are explained below:

First speaker

- (for the Proposition side) defines the terms of the debate in general terms
- (for the Opposition side) states whether the Opposition accepts the definition
- introduces the team’s case
- outlines the main arguments to be put forward by the team and explains which speaker will be covering which areas
- begins developing the team’s arguments, most usually focussing on the single most important one

Second speaker

- develops constructive arguments which support and develop their own team's line and according to the outline announced by the first speaker
- provides initial rebuttal of the opposing team's main argument

Third speaker

- plays a similar role to that of the second speaker, but spends more time on rebuttal
- corrects any mistakes made by previous speakers, such as supplying some crucial details omitted by a previous team member

Reply speaker¹

- gives a "biased summary" by
 - summing up the team's main arguments, showing especially those which have not been rebutted by the opposing team
 - summing up the opposing team's performance, showing how their main arguments have been rebutted
 - reiterating the team's stance on the motion

B. Rules of debating²

It is important that teams should have equal time to speak to the audience. The key rule is that speakers from opposing teams take it in turns to speak.

Number of speakers per side

There are three speakers in each team. Each speaker delivers one main speech, and then one speaker from each team delivers a "reply" speech, to summarise the debate and to conclude the arguments of their team.

If more than three speakers take part on each side, the reply speech should be delivered by a new speaker. Additional speakers beyond that should be added to the main debate.

Length of speeches

Worlds style debating requires that each participant speak for 8 minutes, while the reply speeches are restricted to 4 minutes each. Debate organisers should feel free to reduce the time allocation to whatever length is suitable.

Whether speakers fill their allotted time is entirely up to them. However, speakers who try to go over their allocation will be stopped by the chairperson of the debate.

Points of information

Worlds style debating uses "points of information", or "PoIs", in which the speaker may be interrupted by a member of the opposing team asking a question or making a statement. Although a speaker is never obliged to accept a PoI, it is a challenging addition to debating. Novice debaters should not be introduced to PoIs until they have

¹ The reply speech is given by the first speaker in a team of three, and by a new speaker in a team of four.

² The information given is based on the style of debating used at the World Schools Debating Championships (also known as "Worlds style" or "WSDC style" debating).

mastered the basics of debating and are confident enough to be able to deal with interruptions.

Materials

In Worlds style debating, speakers may not consult printed or Internet-based materials for research after the topic for debate has been announced. The only materials available are a dictionary and an almanac. However, teachers may allow their students access to more materials as long as both teams have identical access rights.

Adjudicator, chairperson, timekeeper, audience

Adjudicator

Adjudicators are experienced debaters who can assess which team should win a debate. When they have considered their verdict, they announce the result, give feedback to teams and speakers about their performance, and explain how the decision about the result has been reached.

Chairperson

The chairperson is in charge of ensuring that the rules of the debate are adhered to by everyone, and of explaining the rules of the debate to the audience before the first speaker begins the debate.

The chairperson introduces the teams and the debate, calls each speaker to come forward when it is their turn to speak, thanks each speaker at the conclusion of their speech, and concludes proceedings at the end of the debate. If the debate is being decided by audience vote, the chairperson is responsible for counting the votes.

Timekeeper

The timekeeper is responsible for monitoring the time that each speaker takes to deliver their speech. They should have a means of signalling the key moments in a speech (most commonly by ringing a bell). For example, they should give a signal a short time before the speaker runs out of time, and give successive signals if the speaker is trying to use more than their allotted time.

Audience

The audience are an integral part of the debate. In many debates, the decision as to which team has won is made by counting the votes by a show of hands of the audience. If adjudicators are judging a debate, there will be no audience vote to determine the winner. Debates may also be adapted to allow for a “floor debate” after the main speeches and before the reply speeches, when members of the audience may give additional speeches in favour of the team they support.

Assessment and scoring guidelines

Debating requires speakers to think critically and to express their ideas in their own natural way. Assessment and scoring guidelines for debating reward speakers who can analyse ideas and explain their own ideas to an audience in a way that communicates meaning as directly as possible.

In Worlds style debating, each speaker is given a score out of 100 points and is assessed on three areas:

Content (40 points)

Content is assessed by looking at the **arguments** and the **rebuttals**.

Here are some criteria for assessing **arguments**:

- How strong are they?
- How relevant are they to the debate?
- Do they put the opposing team under pressure?
- Are the arguments and their importance explained to the audience?
- Are examples and descriptions given to support the arguments?
- Are the consequences of the arguments analysed?

Here are some criteria for assessing **rebuttals**:

- How relevant are they?
- Do they indeed defeat the opposing argument, or do they miss the point?
- Is the argument being rebutted central to the opposing team's strategy?

Style (40 points)

Speakers' style is all about their communication with the audience. Here are some criteria for assessing style:

- Do the speakers use eye contact, gesture and voice to convey emotion and meaning? Or are they hiding behind a piece of paper, simply reading out statements that have been prepared earlier?
- Do the speakers use a natural style of speaking? Or are they delivering a speech that has been written out in full beforehand and reading word-for-word?

Strategy (20 points)

Speakers' strategy refers to how their speech is developed. Here are some criteria for assessing strategy:

- Is sufficient time allocated to each part of the speech?
- Is it easy to follow the speaker's line of argument?
- Is the material presented coherently, or is it randomly distributed throughout the speech? Are signposts appropriately used to organise and present the arguments and supporting evidence coherently and logically?

Score Sheet for Judges/Adjudicators

Scoring Guide		Maximum
Content	definition, team line, arguments, examples, rebuttal	40
Style	delivery, rapport with audience, gestures, voice	40
Strategy	structure of speech, use of time, team work	20
TOTAL		100

PROPOSITION TEAM	CONTENT	STYLE	STRATEGY	TOTAL
1st speaker	/40	/40	/20	/100
2nd speaker	/40	/40	/20	/100
3rd speaker	/40	/40	/20	/100
Reply speaker	/20	/20	/10	/50
PROPOSITION TEAM TOTAL				/350
OPPOSITION TEAM	CONTENT	STYLE	STRATEGY	TOTAL
1st speaker	/40	/40	/20	/100
2nd speaker	/40	/40	/20	/100
3rd speaker	/40	/40	/20	/100
Reply speaker	/20	/20	/10	/50
OPPOSITION TEAM TOTAL				/350

WINNING TEAM: _____

Main reason(s) for decision:

BEST DEBATER: _____

Main reason(s) for decision:

Signature:

Lessons 7-9: Introducing the idea of rhetoric (please refer to SoWs pp.74-77)

Activity 1

Martin Luther King made a famous speech in 1963 about the rights of coloured people in the United States.

Below is a simplified version of his speech.

My people, we must not give up. We must fight for our rights. The road is long and difficult but we must go along it. We must not become angry and evil although people have been evil and angry with us.

We must go on because I have a dream.

I have a dream that one day the sons of slaves of old will be able to sit down together with the sons of slave owners of old at the table like brothers.

I have a dream that even the South hot with hate will become a cool land of love where there will be justice.

I have a dream that one day my four little children will live together in a country where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin.

I have a dream that one day little black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as brothers and sisters.

I have a dream. Do you have that dream? Will you walk along with me?

1. Read the speech and, working with a partner, find examples of the following:
 - a. The speaker uses the same words/phrases/sentences
 - b. The speaker uses phrases/clauses/sentences of the same or similar patterns
 - c. The speaker asks the listeners a question
 - d. The speaker puts words that begin with the same sound close together
2. Check your answers in groups of four. Then discuss the different ways the speaker uses in presenting his speech and explain why he uses these ways.
3. Practise reading out/delivering the speech in your group.
4. Now write a short speech on one of the following topics and use some of the ways you have learned to make your speech interesting:
 - Do not hurt animals
 - Do not smoke
 - Give money to charity

Teachers' notes

**This section contains activities which are more demanding. Teachers should use their discretion as to whether to include or skip it, or to replace it with other appropriate learning activities, based on students' needs and abilities.*

**The speeches used in Activities 1 – 3 are of different levels of difficulty. The speech in Activity 1 is more for students of average ability, while the one in Activity 2 may be more suited to the more able students and Activity 3 the less able.*

**There are specific historical/social contexts under which the speeches in Activities 1 – 3 were made. To facilitate understanding of the speeches, teachers may encourage students to do some research about the historical and social background*

of the speeches, the speakers, or the persons referred to in the speeches before working on the activities.

**Teachers should feel free to choose and adapt any of these activities for use in class. If deemed appropriate, teachers might like to stretch students' abilities or focus more on rhetoric by having students work on more than one speech, in which case it is not necessary to repeat the final task, i.e. Activity 1, Q4.*

**Teachers might like to familiarise students with some of the commonly used rhetorical devices using the handout "Rhetoric" on pp.13-15 of the resources before engaging them in the activities.*

Suggested answers:

1	2 Technique	Effect
a. . <i>We must</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>angry and evil/evil and angry</i> • <i>I have a dream</i> 	Repeating words/phrases (repetition)	to reinforce an idea 'angry and evil/evil and angry': turning the words around for emphasis and to attract attention
b. <i>I have a dream that...</i>	Using the same clause pattern (parallelism)	to clarify an idea (further explain what the dream is) to emphasise the message (the speaker does have the dream) to stress the need to go on fighting for a cause
c. Last line: <i>Do you have that dream? Will you walk along with me?</i>	Asking questions for effects (rhetorical question)	to encourage the audience to reflect on the issue to appeal to the audience to join the cause (they should also work together to make the dream come true)
d. . <i>Sons of slaves</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>hot with hate</i> • <i>land of love</i> • <i>will you walk</i> 	Repeating the first sound of words put close together (alliteration)	to draw the audience's attention to make the phrases more memorable to the audience

Activity 2

John F. Kennedy became President of the United States on January 20, 1961. He made a famous speech that day. Below are some paragraphs taken from his speech.

1. Read the paragraphs in the boxes and answer the questions that follow. You may work with a partner if you prefer. The meanings of some words are given on the side.

Let every nation know, whether it wishes us well or ill¹, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe², to assure the survival and success of liberty.

¹ good or bad² enemy

- a. Underline words that begin with the same sound and are close together.
- b. Find examples of phrases that are similar in pattern to one another.

Let both sides, for the first time, formulate³ serious and precise proposals for the inspection and control of arms and bring the absolute power to destroy other nations under the control of all nations.

³ make

Let both sides seek to invoke⁴ the wonders of science instead of its terrors. Together let us explore the stars, eradicate⁵ disease, tap⁶ the ocean depths, and encourage the arts and commerce.

⁴ remind people of
⁵ stop ⁶ gain from

Let both sides unite to heed⁷ in all corners of the earth the command of Isaiah - to “undo the heavy burdens...and let the oppressed go free.”

⁷ obey

- c. What do the three paragraphs have in common?
d. Why are the final words inside inverted commas (“ ”)?

Now the trumpet summons⁸ us again...to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out...a struggle against the common enemies of mankind: tyranny⁹, poverty, disease, and war itself.

⁸ calls

⁹ bad government

Can we forge¹⁰ against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

¹⁰ make

- e. What word picture does Kennedy create in the first of these two paragraphs? What does he want to make us think of?
f. What comes after the colon?
g. Were there any other such examples in the earlier paragraphs?
h. What sort of sentences are they in the second paragraph above?
i. How long are all the paragraphs you have looked at?

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America can do for you, but what you can do for your country.

- j. Is ‘ask not’ a normal way to begin an expression? What is the form more commonly used?
2. Check your answers in groups of four. Then discuss and list the different ways the speaker uses in presenting his speech, and explain the effect achieved.
 3. Practise delivering the speech in your group.
 4. Now write a short speech on one of the following topics and use some of the ways you have learned to make your speech interesting:
 - Do not hurt animals
 - Do not smoke
 - Give money to charity

Suggested answers:

1	2 Technique	Effect
a. <i>whether it wishes us well/pay any price/bear any burden/ survival and success</i>	Repeating the first sound of words put close together (alliteration)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to draw the audience's attention - to emphasise the words in which repetition occurs
b. verb + any + noun (e.g. <i>pay any price/bear any burden</i>)	Using the same phrase pattern (parallelism)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to clarify and reinforce a message (things shall be done to assure the success of liberty) - parallel structure - symbolic of the unity of vision or purpose
c. They all open with the same phrase - ' <i>Let both sides</i> '	Using the same phrase (repetition)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to emphasise an idea (the importance of involving the two sides)
d. They are a quotation.	Making reference to the Bible (allusion)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to appeal to authority
e. Soldiers going to battle; a long difficult war.	Describing one thing in terms of another (metaphor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to appeal to the audience by providing a vivid description (people should work hard to get rid of such adversity as tyranny, poverty, etc.)
f. A list: ' <i>tyranny, poverty, disease...</i> '	Giving examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to elaborate an idea (providing examples of common enemies of mankind)
g. Yes. In the paragraph in Box 1 – a list: ' <i>pay any price, bear any burden...</i> '	Giving examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to elaborate/expand the point the speaker is making (listing things they are prepared to do for liberty)
h. Questions.	Asking questions for effects (rhetorical questions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to allow audience to think and conclude along with the speaker (making the audience think they should support the move)
i. Short.	Short paragraphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to let audience follow each point more easily
j. <i>Do not ask</i> is more common.	An inverted pattern (word play)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to draw the audience's attention - to emphasise a message (they should take the initiative to do something for the country)

Activity 3

Mr Tony Blair, the former British Prime Minister, made a short speech on 31 August 1997 at the tragic death of Princess Diana.

Read the simplified version of Mr Blair's speech below and answer the questions that follow. You may work with a partner if you prefer.

I feel like everyone else in this country today. I am greatly shocked. Our thoughts and prayers are with Princess Diana's family, particularly her two sons. Our heart goes out to them.

We are today a nation in a state of shock and sadness that is so deeply painful for us. She was a wonderful and a warm human being, although her own life was often touched by sad events. She touched the lives of so many others in Britain and throughout the world with joy and with comfort. How many times shall we remember her in how many different ways – with the sick, the dying, with children, with those in need? With just a look or a gesture that spoke so much more than words, she would show all of us the depth of her sympathy and her kindness.

I am sure we can only guess how difficult things were for her from time to time. But people everywhere, not just in Britain, kept faith with Princess Diana. They liked her, they loved her, they took her as one of the people. She was the People's Princess and that is how she will stay, how she will remain in our hearts and our memories forever.

1. Work in groups of four. The following table shows the different ways the speaker uses in presenting his speech. Discuss and complete the table by finding examples of these ways from the speech and explaining why these ways are used. An illustration is provided below.

Ways the speaker uses in presenting his speech	Examples	Effect
Repeating the first sound of words put close together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>everyone else</i> • <i>wonderful ... warm ...</i> • <i>People's Princess</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>to draw the audience's attention</i> • <i>to help the audience remember better</i>
Using the same phrase/clause/sentence pattern		

Asking questions for effects		
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2. Practise reading out the speech to your group members.
3. Now write a short speech on one of the following topics and try to use some of the ways you have learned to make your speech interesting:
 - Do not hurt animals
 - Do not smoke
 - Give money to charity

Suggested answers:

Ways the speaker uses in presenting his speech	Examples	Effect
Repeating the first sound of words put close together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • everyone else • wonderful ... warm ... • People's Princess 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to draw the audience's attention • to help the audience remember better
Using the same phrase/clause/sentence pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with joy and with comfort • with the sick, the dying, with children, with those in need • Our thoughts and prayers/Our heart • They liked her, they loved her • how many times...in how many different ways • how she will stay/how she will remain • our hearts and our memories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parallel structure symbolic of unity of purpose • to stress the feeling of loss (for Diana had contributed so much to the life of others) • to help the audience concentrate on and remember a message
Asking questions for effects (rhetorical questions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many times shall we remember her in how many different ways – with the sick, the dying, with children, with those in need? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to create a strong impression on the audience (of Diana's achievement and hence our respect) • to get the audience to think and conclude along with the speaker (think of what Diana has done for different people and to remember her)

Rhetoric

When presenting an idea, it is very important to focus not only on what is said but also how it is said so as to get our message across to the intended listeners in a clear, persuasive, impressive and interesting way. This can be achieved by making use of various stylistic or rhetorical devices. Below are some of the commonly used rhetorical devices that could help us to express our ideas in an effective way.

A. Repeating words/phrases/sentences (repetition)

Words, phrases or sentences are repeated in a paragraph or a text to emphasise or reinforce certain facts or ideas, to catch attention of the listeners and to make the ideas more memorable to them.

Examples:

Quit smoking if you still care about your health. Quit smoking if you still care for your family and friends. Quit smoking if you still care to contribute to a fresher environment that could benefit society as a whole.

Love is not a game. It is a promise.

Love is not a game. It is a life-long commitment.

B. Repeating the initial consonant sounds (alliteration)

The initial consonant sound is repeated in two adjacent words (sometimes also in words that are not immediately next to each other) to draw listeners' attention to the phrase and fix it in their mind. It is also useful for emphasis. Repetition of initial consonant sounds means that only the sound, not the letters themselves, must be the same.

Examples:

Tonight, I ask for your prayers for all those ... whose sense of safety and security has been threatened. (George W. Bush)

If women are free from violence, their families will flourish. (Hilary Clinton)

C. Using phrases/clauses/sentences of similar structure (parallelism)

Two or more phrases, clauses or sentences are structured in the same or a similar way to make it easier for the listeners to follow and remember the message. This similarity in structure also helps to present points in order, and clarify or emphasise an idea.

Examples:

Life is a dream, realise it.

Life is a challenge, meet it.

Life is a duty, complete it.

Life is a game, play it. (Mother Teresa)

Tell me and I forget.

Teach me and I may remember.

Involve me and I will learn. (Benjamin Franklin)

D. Asking questions for effects (rhetorical questions)

This type of question is not meant to elicit a reply because it has an obvious or implied answer which may lead to further discussion or allow the listeners to think, query or conclude along with the speaker. It is used to emphasise an idea or message, give an argument or draw a concluding statement.

Examples:

Do you think you can easily convince your children not to smoke when you are a heavy smoker?

Shouldn't the government have the responsibility to take care of the elderly, who made much contribution to society when they were young?

E. Making reference to a famous person, event or a piece of literature

The speaker can make direct or indirect reference to something or someone that the listeners are familiar with in order to explain or clarify an idea or message. Reference can be made to:

- famous people
- history
- literature
- the Bible

Examples:

If you take his parking place, you can expect World War II all over again.

The Scripture says: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." I call on every American family and the family of America to observe a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance, honouring the memory of the thousands of victims of these brutal attacks and comforting those who lost loved ones. (George W. Bush)

F. Creating word pictures (imagery)

Imagery is used to refer to the creation of a mental image/picture or any experience in the mind. This can often be related to the five senses: sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste. Images can be created by making use of:

Similes

A simile is an expression comparing one thing with another, usually in an explicit way. The simile can be introduced with 'as' or 'like'. A simile can be used to help explain or clarify an idea.

Examples:

She runs like a deer.

When he heard the news, his face turned as white as a sheet.

Metaphors

A metaphor is an imaginative expression describing one thing in terms of another. Unlike simile, the comparison made in metaphor is usually more implicit. It is a useful device to help explain an abstract idea clearly and present it in more concrete terms. A metaphor is often used with the verb 'to be'.

Examples:

The Internet is an information superhighway.

A vein is a road for blood cells.

G. Giving a list/examples

An idea or message can be supported or further elaborated with the use of examples or a list of relevant details to help the listeners understand the idea or message better.

Example:

It is important to me that everybody who has been hurt know that the sorrow I feel is genuine: first and most important, my family; also my friends, my staff, my Cabinet, Monica Lewinsky and her family, and the American people. I have asked all for their forgiveness. (Bill Clinton)

Teachers' notes

**Teachers might like to use their discretion as to whether to choose what rhetorical devices to teach, depending on the students' needs and abilities.*

**Teachers might choose not to introduce the technical terms of the rhetorical devices if they find them demanding for their students.*

**Teachers should remind students that rhetorical devices are only tools to help them to express their ideas effectively. It is not a must for them to toss one into every paragraph, and if these devices are used excessively, the speech may seem awkward or artificial. It is most important to teach them how to use the devices appropriately and naturally for the purpose of adding emphasis, effectiveness and beauty to their speech.*

Part 2: Sub-skills

Lessons 10-11: Classifying motions and clarifying terms (please refer to SoWs pp.78-79)

Activity 1

Study the debate motions below.

- a. *Women are the answers to the world*
- b. *Technology is undermining morality*
- c. *Random drug testing of students should be allowed at schools*
- d. *Today's heroes are hollow*
- e. *We should replace exams with coursework*
- f. *The march of science has gone too far*

In groups of four or five, discuss the following:

1. Which of the motions are about comparing two opposing views? Which of them indicate that some action needs to be taken in order to solve a particular problem?
2. Choose the motion your group is most interested in. Explain what its clash would be and how the two sides could argue about it.

Report your views to the class.

Activity 2

Study the debate motions below.

- *Drugs should be legalised*
- *The family is the basis of society*
- *Animals have rights*

Discuss and answer the following questions:

1. What exactly does each of these motions mean?
2. How would you want to limit or control the topic?

Teachers' notes

**Teachers might like to go over the notes on "Types of motions", "Good and bad motions", "Roles of Proposition and Opposition in defining the motion" and "Finding the appropriate level of generality" on pp.18-22 with the students before asking them to attempt the activities.*

Suggested answers:

Activity 1

1. Motions *a*, *b*, *d* and *f* are about comparing two opposing views; motions *c* and *e* are about taking some action to solve a problem.
2. Free answers. The following example shows one of the possible approaches that students can adopt in arguing for or against the motion:
Motion *a* - the clash is whether it is women or men who should play a more prominent role or make greater or more important contributions to the world. While the Proposition can argue about how women have much to offer in

solving the problems of a male-dominated world, the Opposition may argue that it is not a male-dominated world. They may further contest that the world's problems have nothing to do with male dominance and that the two sexes should and do work well together, etc.)

Types of motions

Motions comparing two opposing views or philosophies are called “judgement” motions. Motions which indicate that some sort of policy or action needs to be made in order to solve a particular problem are called “change” motions.

Here is an example of a “judgement” motion:

- *The environment is more important than the economy*

The Proposition will attempt to show why this is true, whereas the Opposition will be coming up with arguments and statements to convince the audience that the economy is, in fact, more important than the environment.

Here are two examples of “change” motions:

- *School uniform should be banned*
- *The death penalty should be abolished*

The Proposition will be telling the audience why the world will be a better place if the change is made, whereas the Opposition will be explaining the disadvantages of the Proposition’s proposals.

Good and bad motions

A good motion for a debate should be a statement that has arguments both for and against it. A bad motion is a statement which discriminates against one team or the other.

Here are some examples of good motions:

- *School uniform should be banned*
- *The environment is more important than the economy*
- *The death penalty should be abolished*

And here is an example of a bad motion:

- *Human rights are valuable*

For this motion, the Opposition would have to argue that human rights are not valuable and consequently that we should ignore them. This is clearly a very difficult (and indeed ridiculous) argument to have to defend. The debate will almost certainly be won by the Proposition team without them having to perform well at all. No one enjoys this sort of debate.

Roles of Proposition and Opposition in defining the motion

A. Role of Proposition – Setting up the definition

The Proposition have the task of defining the motion for the debate. In other words, the first speaker of the Proposition must explain clearly what the team believe the topic or motion means.

In defining the motion, the Proposition need to:

- clarify the nature and scope of the topic and specify the issues to be debated; and
- ensure that their definition is logical and relevant and one which allows for both sides of the debate.

For example, if the motion is “This House* believes that HKSAR Government’s public smoking ban has failed”, the Proposition will need to define it in a way that will ensure that the overall debate will focus on what the ban involves, its main purpose(s) and whether it has been successful or not. Then, they have to define “failure” in a way that will allow the Opposition to take a reasonable position to defend the “success” of the ban. They must address the ban’s incapability to meet the objectives or expectations it sets out to achieve. This will allow the Opposition to argue that the expectations are too ambitious or unrealistic, or that the ban has succeeded in meeting the objectives.

B. Role of Opposition – Setting up the clash

The Opposition’s job is to set up the “clash” of the debate, i.e. the two opposing views of the teams. They should clearly present their argument and the reasons for disagreeing with the Proposition, otherwise the focus of the clash will become blurred and the debate will be difficult to follow.

The Opposition should accept the Proposition’s definition if it is generally reasonable and allows both teams grounds for debate. However, the Opposition should clarify it if there are terms or concepts that are insufficiently or incompletely defined. They should also challenge it under the following conditions:

- ***when the definition is unreasonable or so unusual that it is beyond what the average, reasonable person would expect or accept*** – For example, if in the motion “This House believes that mercy killing should be outlawed”, the Proposition take mercy killing to mean that any form of killing is considered merciful if it brings benefits to society or the person(s) to be killed rather than defining it as euthanasia, an interpretation which ordinary intelligent people are likely to adopt, the definition is considered unreasonable.
- ***when the definition provides no reasonable grounds for opposing it*** – For example, if in the above motion “This House believes that HKSAR Government’s public smoking ban has failed,” the Proposition define it to mean that the Government’s ban aims at eliminating public smoking but since public smoking still exists, the Government has failed, there will be no reasonable grounds for the Opposition to take because to argue against that definition would mean saying

* Some motions in this set of material begin with “This House”. The expression simply refers to people in the room and can be easily replaced by any other form which teachers deem suitable, e.g. “We believe...”, “That we should...”.

there is no more public smoking in Hong Kong, which is not the case.

Finding the appropriate level of generality

As suggested in the handout “Roles of the Proposition and Opposition in defining the motion” on pp.20-21, both sides have the responsibility to set the scope and area of the debate, making sure that they are arguing more or less the same issues and engaging each other effectively.

Consider the following example:

Motion: This House believes that the Internet is a bad influence.

If the Proposition base their case entirely on how the Internet is a bad influence on teenagers only and the Opposition choose to focus on adults instead, this will be a bad debate. This is because the teams have significantly reduced the scope of the motion (i.e. the motion has not specified the group of people affected), thus preventing them from engaging with each other effectively. If the Proposition really choose to focus on the bad effect of the Internet on teenagers only, then the Opposition will have every right to oppose this and extend the debate to adults as well. They can argue that the Internet has a positive influence on people from all walks of life, thus ensuring the broader discussion which the more general motion intends.

An alternative and more feasible approach is that the Proposition come up with an argument that focusses on a few key issues associated with the bad influences of the Internet such as addiction, exposure to violent and obscene content, fraud and other Internet crimes. The Opposition can then engage with these points and bring in other points relating to how the Internet has benefited society to support their side. In this way, both teams have reached some common ground for debate and there will be plenty to talk about.

Lessons 12-14: Looking for underlying principles in motions (please refer to SoWs pp.78-79)

To argue convincingly for or against the motion, it is necessary to work out its underlying principles. For example,

- *Keeping a pet bird is wrong*
implies that animals do have rights to freedom
- *The government should ban fast food*
implies that it is within the role of the government to protect us from ourselves

Activity 1

Motion One: *Corporal punishment at home is acceptable*

Motion Two: *Public figures deserve private life*

In groups, select one of the motions above, discuss and answer the following questions:

1. What are the principles supporting the motion?
2. Are the principles acceptable to you? Why?
3. What are the principles opposing the motion?

Activity 2

Motion One: *This House would break the law to stop animal experiments*

Which of these are principles that need to be discussed in this debate?

1. Human welfare is the most important factor in deciding right and wrong.
2. Animals should be treated as beings of value in their own right.
3. Animal experiments for cosmetics are a waste of time.
4. It is acceptable to break a bad law.
5. We can all do what we want.

Motion Two: *This House believes parents should not be allowed to hit their children*

Which of these are principles that need to be discussed in this debate?

1. Parents have traditionally hit their children when they do wrong.
2. Children have rights.
3. Most parents love their children.
4. The government has a duty to protect the weak.
5. The public interest takes priority over the rights of parents.
6. Violence is not an effective method of training.
7. All violence is wrong.

Teachers' notes

**Teachers might like to go over the notes on "Analysis of underlying principles" on p.25 with the students before asking them to attempt the activities.*

Suggested answers:

Activity 1

Motion 1

1. Parents know better; they have the right and the duty to punish their children.
2. Free answers.
3. Children have the same human rights as adults; they should be protected from any form of violence.

Motion 2

1. Privacy is an inalienable social right of any individual.
2. Free answers.
3. Public interest is more important than the rights of individuals.

Activity 2

Motion 1

1, 2 and 4 are important principles to be argued here. 5 is a principle but hardly a useful one. 3 is a statement of fact or opinion that is not especially relevant in terms of this motion.

Motion 2

2, 4, 5 and 7 are statements of principle. One could still support the motion if one accepted only 2, 4 and 5. 7 is a stronger statement than is necessary for this argument.

1, 3 and 6 are statements of fact and observation. As such they can be argued about in terms of research and statistics. 1 and 3 are fairly neutral points. 6 is important for the debate.

Analysis of underlying principles

Most debates can be defined as a clash of principles (economic, social, moral, political and so on). Debating teams should be able to work out from a motion what the key issues and principles are, and they should clearly state the principles during their first speeches so that everyone knows where the clash will be, and participants may delve deeply into their opponents' case.

A. What the Proposition should do

The Proposition need to work out and state the underlying principle of the debate. The best way to determine the principle behind a statement is simply to ask why questions, the answers to which will lead to the immediate principle. For example, a Proposition team that is arguing that reclamation in Hong Kong harbour should be stopped may say "because it is unnecessary". Why is it unnecessary? "Because we could achieve the same goals using the land we already have." Why is that important? "Because the harbour is a valuable resource which we should not waste." Why not? "Because it is a key element of Hong Kong's natural environment." But why can't we use some of it? "Because the economic benefits of reclamation aren't as important as the environmental damage that reclamation would cause." Here, at last, we have the underlying principle – that environmental protection is more important than economic benefit.

B. What the Opposition should do

The Opposition team should be listening closely to the first Proposition speech, in order to work out the principles that the Proposition's arguments are based on. If they are not made explicit, the Opposition will need to work them out in order to oppose them effectively. They should be asking themselves:

- Why is the Proposition taking this view?
- What is their justification?
- What kind of world view does it represent?

These questions will lead them to the Proposition's principles. They must then work out how to contest these principles. Broadly speaking, they have two options:

1. ***Oppose the principles of the Proposition*** – In the above-mentioned example where the Proposition have been arguing that reclamation in Hong Kong harbour should be stopped because environmental protection is more important than economic benefit, the Opposition will be able to take the position that, on this occasion, the economic benefit is so great that some environmental damage is acceptable.
2. ***Agree with the Proposition's principles but differ in the action to take*** – In the example above, the Opposition may argue that while environmental protection is important, reclamation in the Hong Kong harbour should still take place since there is no alternative solution that does not damage the environment in some ways.

Lessons 15-17: Identifying the issues and working on “judgement” and “change” motions (please refer to SoWs pp.78-79)

Activity 1

There are some debates in which the motion requires teams to take up opposition positions on an issue of principle. They are called “judgement” debates.

Look at the following motion for a judgement debate:

- *This House believes that copyright is a hindrance to the spread of knowledge*

In groups, discuss the following:

1. Identify the principle(s) on which the motion is based.
2. Identify the clash.
3. How could the Proposition define the debate?
4. How could the Opposition contest the definition given by the Proposition?
5. What is the relevance of the principle(s) to your daily lives?

Activity 2

There are some debates in which the motion states that an action would or should be taken. Such debates are called “change” debates.

Look at the following motion for a change debate:

- *This House would send the illegal immigrants back to where they are from*

In groups, discuss the following:

1. Define the issue at stake.
2. Define the problem.
3. Suggest a solution to the problem.
4. Explain how the solution will resolve the problem.

Teachers’ notes

** The less able students can be asked to work on motions with issues closer to home, e.g. This House believes school holidays should be shorter or This House believes the most important thing in choosing a job is money.*

**Teachers might like to go over the notes on “Roles of Proposition and Opposition in defining the motion” (pp.20-21), “Finding the appropriate level of generality” (p.22), “Working on a ‘judgement’ motion” (p.27) and “Working on a ‘change’ motion” (p.28) with the students before asking them to attempt the activities.*

Working on a “judgement” motion

In a “judgement” debate, each side will attempt to show why their own principle is correct or more important.

A. What the Proposition should do

As mentioned in the notes on “Roles of Proposition and Opposition in defining the motion” on pp.20-21, the Proposition have to first and foremost give a “fair and reasonable” definition of the motion.

Depending on the topic for debate, the next step that the Proposition should take is to consider:

- the economic, environmental, social or political impact that following a principle would involve, and
- the individual or group benefits and costs of different principles, and so on.

The Proposition should then establish their position. They should:

- clearly state the principles that underlie their position,
- set out arguments that explain why those principles are valid, and
- produce examples that prove why the principles and arguments are realistic.

Take the example of the motion “Corporal punishment at home is acceptable” on p.23. The Proposition should state their underlying principles, such as parents know better and they have the right and duty to punish their children. They should then argue why parents should punish their children when they have done something wrong and why corporal punishment is an effective form of punishment, and illustrate these with appropriate examples.

B. What the Opposition should do

Once the Proposition have outlined its definition and presented their principles and arguments, the Opposition should check whether the terms of the definition leave them with sufficient grounds to debate. If so, they must take the position they have been given. If not, they should challenge the definition. For details on how this could be done, please refer to the handout on “Roles of Proposition and Opposition in defining the motion” on pp.20-21.

Once the definition is settled, the Opposition should proceed to dealing with the Proposition’s arguments. The Opposition have to present their underlying principles, arguments and examples, which should show why the Proposition’s position is wrong, and why their own position is more valid.

Working on a “change” motion

A “change” debate is one in which the motion states that an action would or should be taken. There is a clear issue at the heart of every “change” debate. Debaters need to develop the ability to focus on the issue and to present their ideas effectively.

A. What the Proposition should do

The Proposition may apply the “issue-problem-solution-resolution” model. According to this model, the Proposition should

- define the **issue** at stake
- define the **problem** that is being caused
- suggest a **solution** to this problem
- explain how doing so will lead to a better world, i.e. the **resolution** of the problem

For example, in the motion “The rich should donate more to help the poor”, the issue is social equality, but the problem preventing this is, in part, the insufficient help to the poor. The suggested solution can be for the rich to donate more money, and doing so will lead to the problem of the gap between the rich and the poor being resolved.

B. What the Opposition should do

The Opposition have several options for disagreeing with the Proposition. They may argue that:

There is no real issue – They may challenge the Proposition’s claim that there is a real problem to be solved. There is therefore no need to take any action, since if the problem is non-existent, there is no need to find a solution.

The solution suggested is impractical – They may agree with the Proposition that there is a problem that needs solving, but then disagree that the solution given is the correct one. They may go on to argue that although the problem exists, any attempts to solve it will only make matters worse, or they may propose their own solution.

The solution suggested will have other bad consequences – They may argue that although the Proposition’s idea would resolve the problem, the action would lead to other undesirable consequences.

Lessons 18-21: Analysing persuasive language and its underlying techniques

(please refer to SoWs pp.80-81)

Activity

Work in pairs on the following:

1. Look at the advertisements you and your partner have brought to class. Discuss and draw up a list of strategies of persuasion used by these advertisements. Present your views to the class.
2. Draw up a list of emotional, rational and ethical arguments for and against anti-smoking legislation.

Suggested answers:

1.
 - emotional appeal
 - appeals to authority
 - identification with celebrities
 - positive language (with the use of some pejorative language for the competitors)
 - polar logic: if you are not a, then you are b
 - identification with morality/religion, etc.
 - credibility: use of scientific fact

2.

For

- The agonies of lung cancer
- Cost analysis of treating tobacco-related illnesses
- Need to protect the easily influenced young people
- Passive smokers

Against

- Outrage at government interference in private decision – Police bursting into homes to see if anyone is smoking? Will our food be selected for us next?
- Difficulties of enforcement
- Smuggling
- Adults should be left to take their own informed decisions

Lessons 22-23: Logical argumentation (please refer to SoWs pp.80-81)

Activity

Identify the errors of logic for the following arguments:

1. My uncle smoked heavily and lived to be 98. Smoking does you no harm.
2. Fewer girls than boys study engineering, so engineering must be better suited to the male mind.
3. AIDS is incurable, so it is a waste of time doing research on it.
4. Americans live longer than Africans and eat more hamburgers, so eating hamburgers is not harmful to health.
5. The death penalty means murdering someone; murder is wrong, so death penalty is wrong.

Suggested answers:

1. Using the uncle's personal experience is insufficient evidence to prove the point that smoking is not harmful.
2. The conclusion that engineering is better suited to the male mind does not follow from the premise that more boys study the subject.
3. Merely presenting unfavourable information about AIDS hardly counts as evidence for the claim that doing research on AIDS is a waste of time.
4. The fact that Americans both live longer than Africans and eat more hamburgers than Africans does not prove that a causal relationship between eating hamburgers and health exists.
5. That death penalty means murdering someone, one of the premises of the conclusion that death penalty is wrong, is a conviction without proof.

Lessons 24-31: Rebuttal and researching information (please refer to SoWs pp.80-83)

Activity 1

Study the debate motions below.

- *The media serves us well*
- *Cannabis should be legalised*
- *Tradition is holding us back*

For **each** of the motions above, do the following:

1. Make a list of information you need to find.
2. Make a list of sources you can turn to.
3. Do an Internet search and take note of any useful information.

Activity 2

Form groups of six and do the following:

- Divide your group into two teams, the proposition team and the opposition team.
- Based on the information you have gathered on one of the above topics, formulate arguments in support of your team's position, guess the arguments your opponents would use and think of ways to rebut or damage them. Take note of your ideas.
- Compare notes with the other team and see if you predicted correctly and whether your opponents think their arguments would be damaged by the strategies you suggested.

Activity 3

In this part, your group conducts a mini-debate on another one of the three topics above. Do the following within your group:

- Members from the two teams sit facing each other.
- A member from the proposition team introduces the topic and presents an argument in support of the position of his team.
- A member from the opposition team sets out an alternative point of view and rebuts the initial point made by the proposition team.
- Each team then take it in turns to present their arguments, rebutting the opposing team's arguments as far as possible. The mini-debate will go on until all the arguments are exhausted.

Teachers' notes

**Teachers might like to go over the notes on "Using rebuttal in debate speeches" on pp.32-33 with the students before asking them to attempt the activities.*

Using rebuttal in debate speeches

Rebuttal is the act of proving opposite arguments to be false or incorrect. Good rebuttal is the sign of good debaters, as it shows that they have listened to the other team's speech, understood it and worked out why they disagree with it.

A. What to rebut

Not every argument is worth rebutting. Speakers should use their time wisely and look out for the arguments that are central to the opposition's strategy. Rebutting these successfully will almost certainly win the debate, since they lie at the heart of the opposition's case, and if they fall, so will most of the opposition's other arguments. These are, by nature, also the opposition's strongest arguments, and so it will take plenty of analysis to disprove them. However, the rewards for doing so are great, and so speakers should learn to analyse each argument put forward by the opposing team, to see which will be most rewarding, and try to take it on.

Speakers should not spend time on rebutting arguments that are obviously ridiculous, inconsistent or irrelevant. However, if an irrelevant argument is particularly clever, it is usually worthwhile to swiftly explain why it is irrelevant.

B. How to rebut

Here are some suggestions for opposing an argument:

Direct consequences

Looking at the direct consequences of the argument being put forward is a very effective means of attack. Speakers may analyse the argument by asking:

- Will it really impact in the way that the opposing team claim it will?
- Is their logic correct in the way that they draw out the links from cause to consequence?

If a speaker can show the audience that the opposing team have bad logic, then that completely undermines them and reduces the effectiveness of all their other arguments as well.

Indirect consequences

Speakers may also consider the indirect consequences of the argument being put forward and show that it will lead to other, much worse, effects elsewhere than in the areas the opposing team are discussing.

Contradiction of other arguments or principles

Students should also listen out for whether the opposing team's current argument is in any way contradicting something that they have said earlier. Self-contradiction is a very common mistake in debates.

Lack of examples

Speakers should also listen out for whether the opposing team are backing up their argument with examples. If that is the case, speakers should attempt to find counter-examples, ones that prove the reverse of the speaker's arguments, and force the opposing team onto the defensive. If there are no examples to support an argument,

speakers should challenge the opposing team to come up with some.

C. When to rebut

Rebuttal can be made at the beginning of a speech or integrated into an argument that a speaker is trying to make.

Rebutting at the beginning of a speech

Rebuttal may be most easily inserted directly after the introduction, before the main arguments are developed. Speakers may begin the rebuttal like this:

“Now, before I move on to my first argument, I would like to respond to something that the opposing team have said...”

Integrating rebuttal into a speech

If the rebuttal is relevant to one of the areas that the speaker will cover, it may be used as part of his/her argument. This has the advantage of showing that the principles being used for rebuttal are the same as those underlying the team’s case, thus preventing rebuttal from being rebutted again by the opposing team on the grounds that the principles being used are contradictory. Here are two suggestions for integrating rebuttal into a speech:

1. ***Make notes*** – To find rebuttal arguments they can use, speakers should take notes during debates, in particular on the speeches made by the opposing team. Notes should be made on file cards rather than on large pieces of paper so that they can be added to the existing speeches with the minimum of disruption.
2. ***Know the structure of the speech well*** – It is vital that students know the structure that they intend to use in their speech well in advance. If they do, they will be much more able to add in extra material, particularly rebuttal, at the most appropriate point in their speech. If they do not know the structure of their speech in advance, they are likely to add elements at the wrong points, making less use of that new material and also reducing the impact of their speeches as a whole.

To use rebuttal partway through their speech, speakers may say something like this:
“...and now I would like to address area B. Before I give my constructive argument, I would just like to respond to something that the opposing team said on this topic...”

Lessons 32-36: Speech structure and construction (please refer to SoWs pp.82-85)

Activity 1

The following are some jumbled points from a speech arguing that the import, sale and use of tobacco products should be made illegal in Hong Kong. Put the points in the right order in the right hand column of the table below. One has been done for you as an example.

- A. *One man’s freedom cannot interfere with another’s or impose a heavy cost on society...*
- B. *Most smokers say they want to give up...*
- C. *Personal freedom and choice is very important...*
- D. *Passive smoking is a matter of grave concern...*
- E. *The issues of enforcement and trade relations will be covered by the second speaker...*
- F. *Smoking is a serious health hazard...*
- G. *Rational people must support this motion...*
- H. *Smoking causes fires and litter...*
- I. *It is justified to ban tobacco...*
- J. *Tobacco-related health care costs are enormous...*
- K. *Should smokers be allowed the freedom to smoke at the expense of non-smokers or society at large?...*

Sign-posting	Points for the speech
<i>Let me first establish...</i>	<i>Smoking is a serious health hazard...</i>

Check your answers with the teacher.

Activity 2

Consider where you would use the following examples of sign-posting to give the speech structure. Put them in the right boxes in the left hand column of the table in Activity 1. One has been done for you as an example. (Note: Not all the points need sign-posting.)

- 1. *However...*
- 2. *Let me give you three examples...*
- 3. *Let me first establish...*
- 4. *Of course, there are other issues...*
- 5. *So, we must ask...*
- 6. *Thus, for these reasons...*
- 7. *Let me conclude by saying...*

8. *Now let me make a clear statement of principle...*
9. *Anyway...*

Activity 3

Comment on which of these examples/sets of figures/stories the speaker of the above speech could make good use of, and say where they would fit.

Examples/Figures/Stories	Comment
Description of a crowded hospital	
Survey results – number of smokers who say they want to give up	
Own experience of a smoke-filled room	
Quotation on the beauty of freedom	
Description of someone dying horribly of lung cancer	
Example of someone playing music and disturbing neighbours	
Story about law-enforcement	
Statement by leading health body on harmful effects of tobacco	
Story about an uncle trying to give up smoking	
Anti-smoking laws in California	
Statistics on tobacco-related illness and death in Hong Kong	
Description of a UK hotel fire caused by smoking in bed	
Hong Kong estimates on tobacco health costs	

Teachers' notes

**Teachers should feel free to choose how many of these examples for use based on students' needs, abilities and interests.*

Suggested answers:

Activities 1 and 2

Sign-posting	Points for the speech
Let me first establish...	Smoking is a serious health hazard...
Now let me make a clear statement of principle...	Personal freedom and choice is very important...
However...	One man's freedom cannot interfere with another's or impose a heavy cost on society...
So we must ask...	Should smokers be allowed the freedom to smoke at the expense of non-smokers or society at large?...
Let me give you three examples...	Passive smoking is a matter of grave concern...
	Smoking causes fires and litter...
	Tobacco-related health care costs are enormous...
Thus, for these reasons...	It is justified to ban tobacco...
Anyway...	Most smokers say they want to give up...
Of course, there are other	The issues of enforcement and trade relations will

issues...	be covered by the second speaker...
Let me conclude by saying...	Rational people must support this motion...

The speech opens with the speaker establishing that smoking causes great harm to health. There is then a statement of principle (which the speaker knows will be made later by the opposition) that human freedom is important, but one person's freedom cannot interfere with that of others or cause a heavy cost to them. So, does smoking interfere with non-smokers' freedom and cause heavy costs? Yes, it does and here are three examples. Passive smoking interferes with the rights of others to fresh air. Smoking causes fires and litter. It also causes heavy health care costs. Thus, it is justified to ban it despite the smokers' right of choice. Anyway, most smokers say they want to give up so they should not complain. Of course, there are issues of how practical the ban is and the second speaker will discuss these matters. In conclusion, the speaker says no one can resist the logic of the argument or disagree.

Activity 3

Examples/Figures/Stories	Comment
Description of a crowded hospital	Does not seem useful – everyone knows about the problem
Survey results – number of smokers who say they want to give up	Useful for the comment near the end about smokers' probable support for strong measures
Own experience of a smoke-filled room	If brief could add a little colour to the passive smoking part
Quotation on the beauty of freedom	Unnecessary and distracting
Description of someone dying horribly of lung cancer	The tone of the speech is logical – the statistics will impress more
Example of someone playing music and disturbing neighbours	Unnecessary – the point about freedoms not disturbing others is simple enough – explaining the obvious is boring
Story about law-enforcement	Definitely not – the second speaker is handling this topic
Statement by leading health body on harmful effects of tobacco	Yes, essential when establishing this point. The other side will look silly if they are contradicting the WHO, etc.
Story about an uncle trying to give up smoking	Very briefly in the part about smokers wanting to give up – might be a nice touch but not necessary
Anti-smoking laws in California	Unnecessary – but the speaker should have researched the law elsewhere so that if the other side ask why Hong Kong should be different from other places, a stream of data can be used to make them look uninformed
Statistics on tobacco-related illness and death in Hong Kong	Yes, needed for the opening remarks
Description of a UK hotel fire caused by smoking in bed	Unhelpful – everyone knows there are fires caused by cigarettes
Hong Kong estimates on tobacco health costs	Yes, needed to show tobacco has a high social cost

Useful phrases for a debate speech

A. Introducing the motion

Honorable Chairperson, teachers and fellow students, today we are going to debate the motion ...

Today I hope to persuade you to agree that...

This afternoon we have the easy task of convincing you that ...

B. Defining the motion

We need to spend a moment looking at this motion more closely.

Most people would take this to mean ...

C. Allocating the arguments

We have five strong arguments to present to you. I will cover the first three and my colleague the other two. First, ... Then, ...

Our third speaker will explain this in greater detail.

I will leave the evidence for this to the next speaker.

D. Presenting your arguments

I am sure you will agree that ...

We do not mean to argue ...

The thing we are most interested in is the point of principle.

Any fair-minded person must agree ...

The figures prove this conclusively.

Surely we all agree ... so isn't this case exactly the same?

Let the facts speak for themselves.

E. Attacking the opposition's arguments

I hope the other side won't use the weak and obvious argument that ...

The last speaker seems to have forgotten ...

Sadly I must point out the lack of logic in my opponent's argument.

Finding one or two examples does not prove a point. Of course, there are exceptions and extreme cases.

Prejudice and appeals to our worst emotions is not argument.

I am sure we all enjoyed the last speaker's performance but let's now look at this rationally and stop the play-acting.

You can only possibly support the motion if you ...

F. Reviewing your arguments

Let me review my opponent's argument and show you its weakness.

In the time that remains, let me remind you of the arguments our side have presented.

G. Summarising and concluding

So let me sum up. I/We have presented three arguments against this motion.

Please follow your hearts and support the motion.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your time and support.

Part 3: Debates

Lessons 41-50: Holding a debate (please refer to SoWs pp.88-89)

Adjudication Form

Debate Team:	
First Speaker:	Class: Date:
Argument (logic, presentation of arguments)	*/50
Content (knowledge of facts)	/50
Language (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary)	/50
Style (rhetorical/persuasive skills, body language, audibility)	/50
Total	/200
Comment:	
Second Speaker:	Class: Date:
Argument (logic, presentation of arguments)	/50
Content (knowledge of facts)	/50
Language (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary)	/50
Style (rhetorical/persuasive skills, body language, audibility)	/50
Total	/200
Comment:	
Third Speaker:	Class: Date:
Argument (logic, presentation of arguments)	/50
Content (knowledge of facts)	/50
Language (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary)	/50
Style (rhetorical/persuasive skills, body language, audibility)	/50
Total	/200
Comment:	
Team Total	/600
Signature:	

***Marking Scheme**

0-10	serious problems
11-20	weak
21-30	average
31-40	good
41-50	excellent

Teachers' notes

**Different criteria and mark scales can be used to evaluate performance in debates. Teachers may use those in the above adjudication form, in the score sheet on p.5, or other criteria and scales as they see fit.*