

# Exploring the world of debating

## Week 8

**4<sup>th</sup> September 2025**

Debating is when you argue for or against a topic you have to prove why your team is right and the opposition is wrong. A topic might be something simple like cats are better pets than dogs or students should get more holidays.

Let's begin with the setup of a formal debate.

Two teams of three speakers each:

- Affirmative Team - Supports the resolution
- Negative Team - Opposes the resolution

Two teams of three people sit at the front of the room on one side is the affirmative team and on the other side is the negative team. A timekeeper, chairperson, and judge(s) oversee the debate. The structure ensures fairness and gives both sides equal opportunity to present their arguments.

The first speaker of the affirmative team is the first person to speak. The timekeeper starts the stopwatch when the speaker begins:

The first speaker

- defines the keywords of the topic
- introduces the team's argument and
- begins the debate.

Different debates have different time limits, for example, if each speaker has to speak for four minutes, the timekeeper will ring the bell once at three minutes as a warning and twice at four minutes to indicate to the speaker their time is up.

The second person to speak is the first speaker from the negative team, like the affirmative side,

The first speaker of the negative team

- define the key words and
- introduce their team's argument
- rebuts points made by the first speaker of the affirmative team.

Rebuttal is when you choose a point made by the opposition and explain why they're wrong and proves why you're right. Rebuttals can win or lose debates, however, you must never become personal in rebuttals.

After the first speaker of the negative side, the second speaker of the affirmative side speaks followed by the second speaker of the negative side. Both of these speakers continue their team's arguments and rebuff the opposition.

The third speakers of each team are the last people to speak. First, it's the third speaker of the affirmative team and then the third speaker of the negative team. Both of these speakers rebut the opposition's debate and summarizes their own team's arguments the third speaker of the negative team is the last person to address the audience in the debate and have the last word this can be an advantage in debating. At the end of the debate, a judge or team of panels will decide which team is the winner.

They consider your presentation skills'; the timing of your debate and it's the team with the most convincing argument that wins the debate. The captain of the winning side says the opposition for a good debate as well as the judge, timekeeper, chairperson and audience. The captain of the defeated side also thinks the same people debating teaches you to look at both sides of an argument. Sometimes you may not agree with the side of the debate you are arguing and this can be challenging but it can be a good experience to look at a topic with a different point of view, it also teaches you teamwork. Each member of the team needs to know what their teammates are talking about planning and writing.

## **How to Select Good Debate Topics**

A good debate topic is one that lets the participants and the audience learn about both sides of an issue. Consider the following factors when selecting a debate topic:

**Interest:** Are you interested in the topic? Would the topic be interesting to your fellow classmates, as well as to the audience listening to the debate? **Selecting a topic that you're interested in makes the preparation part of the debate more exciting**, as well as the debate livelier.

**Argument Potential:** **You want to choose a debate topic that has solid argument potential.** If one side is clearly right, or if there isn't a lot of available information, you'll have a hard time crafting a solid debate.

**Availability of Data:** **Data points make an argument more robust.** You'll want to select a topic with lots of empirical data that you can pull from to bolster your argument.

### **Technology Debate Topics**

- Social media has improved human communication.
- The development of artificial intelligence will help humanity.
- Humans should invest in technology to explore and colonize other planets.
- Alternative energy can effectively replace fossil fuels.
- Cell phone radiation is dangerous and should be limited

### **Education Debate Topics**

- Public prayer should not be allowed in schools.
- Schools should block sites like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram on their computers.
- Standardized testing should be abolished.
- All students should have an after-school job or internship.
- All student loan debt should be eliminated.
- Homeschooling is better than traditional schooling.
- Sexual education should be mandatory in schools.

### **Social and Political Issues Debate Topics**

- The death penalty should be abolished.
- All drugs should be legalized.
- Climate change is the greatest threat facing humanity today.
- Abortion should be banned.
- Every citizen should be mandated to perform national public service.
- Plastic bags should be banned.

## Reference

Milliman, H. (n.d.). *55 Great Debate Topics for Any Project*. PrepScholar Blog. Retrieved from <https://blog.prepscholar.com/good-debate-topics>

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