



Teacher Mini-Debate Guide

Provides Teachers With:

- 1. A New Model for Creating Debate Activities**
- 2. Assessment Criteria for Teacher Evaluation**
- 3. Student Guide for Judging Mini-Debates**

INCLUDES:

- Model adapted from NFL Ted Turner Debates: Controversy
- Informal model to encourage greater use of mini-debates by teachers as a learning activity
- Teacher procedures for organizing, managing, and evaluating mini-debates
- Student procedures for researching, organizing, and presenting argumentation
- Student model for scoring debate to ensure participation

Teacher's Guide to the Mini-Debate Format

The following rules and procedures were developed by ProQuest to motivate teachers to integrate more mini-research debate activities in their classrooms, using ProQuest learning resources. The rules and procedures are adapted from the National Forensic Leagues new Ted Turner Debate Format which is named CONTROVERSY:

<http://debate.uvm.edu/NFL/rostrumlib/ted%20intro%20roberts%2011-02.pdf>

Why Mini-Debates?—There are millions of high school students who have never debated and will never debate because current **formal debate** rules and procedures require a major commitment of time and expertise by teachers, students, and judges. The **inherent value** of the research, critical thinking and presentation skills found in debate activities are then **lost as a learning opportunity** for all these students. By simplifying the rules and judging, and decreasing the time needed for the activity, teachers will be motivated to create these engaging “mini-debates” which provide the excitement and develop the essential skills that students will use in higher education, careers, and decision making in life and citizenship.

Another goal is to encourage schools to include debate as a co-curricular activity in schools that **currently do not debate** and maybe never have. ProQuest understands that the cost and complexity of formal debate teams and leagues has made debate impossible for small schools and for schools without extensive financial resources.

A third goal is to include debate activities in schools that use block scheduling. Block scheduling provides greater opportunities for debate because of its longer class periods.

Use Mini-Debate Model with Most ProQuest Learning Resources – ProQuest resources provide students with thousands of authoritative current and historic articles and websites to support or refute any real-world issue. These are issues that most students care about and would be easily motivated to research and express their reasoned opinions.

Correlation to State and National Standards – The following statements are typical of those found in state standards particularly those in English Language Arts. Student will be able to:

1. Conduct research using multiple sources to support a position in a debate
2. Put information from multiple sources into debate format
3. Participate in a debate arguing one position in an effective and focused manner
4. Connect information and events in text to experience and to related text and sources
5. Locate specific information by using organizational features in expository text
6. Synthesize information from multiple sources to draw conclusions
7. Deliver a polished speech that is organized and suited to the audience and that uses resource materials to clarify and defend positions
8. Evaluate the effectiveness of informal and formal presentations that use illustrations, statistics, comparisons, and analogies

The ProQuest Mini-Debate Format

1. Two speakers for each side of the issue
2. Teacher determines which students are pro and con on the stated issue
3. Each speaker is to use note cards synthesized from *Leading Issues* research
4. Teams may flip a coin to determine sides and speaker order
5. Speakers should take notes during opposing speaker presentations for Crossfire questions

Mini-Debate Activities Sequence and Time Limits

Team A Speaker 1 -- 3 minute limit

Team B Speaker 1 -- 3 minute limit

Timeout – 1 minute

Crossfire (between A1 & B1) 2 minute limit

Team A Speaker 2 -- 3 minute limit

Team B Speaker 2 -- 3 minute limit

Timeout – 1 minute

Crossfire (between A2 & B2) 2 minute limit

Timeout – 2 minutes

A1 summary -- 1 minute limit

B1 summary -- 1 minute limit

Grand Crossfire (all speakers) -- 3 minute limit

Timeout – 2 minutes

A2 Last Shot -- 1 minute limit

B2 Last Shot -- 1 minute limit

Total Time Including Timeouts = 29 minutes

Research Instructions—Each speaker for a side will coordinate with and develop at least 3 facts and 3 expert opinions that are different than their partner for their initial presentations. Each will use the editor selected resources of *SIRS Leading Issues* for the side of the issue that they will present. At the end of case researching and writing, each speaker's cases should be checked to be sure they reflect the following elements:

1. Each speaker for each side of the issue opens with a different set of 3 arguments
2. They fit the 3-minute time limit
3. They include at least 3 of the following examples: real world, philosophical, historical, and economic
4. Numbers, facts, and expert opinions are incorporated

Speaker Instructions—Each speaker will outline the presentation so that it fits into the 3-minute time limit. Each will use separate note cards or papers for each point that you make including examples. When the opposing team speaks, each will take notes for the *Crossfires*.

Crossfire Instructions—During the Crossfire period, both speakers have the floor and may ask and answer questions during the 2-minute period. The participants are instructed to keep questions and answers succinct; rudeness should not be tolerated. In the Grand Crossfire all four students have the floor. The first question **must** be posed by the team which did not speak just prior to the Crossfire period.

- One partner can take the role of questioner while the other mollifies the opposition.
- A stronger partner can cover for a weaker partner.
- Partners can mutually intervene to deflect questions from their opponents in order to try to unsettle well-placed attacks.

- Partners can interrupt each other, not just the opposition, to shift the focus of questions and attacks.

Summary Speaker Instructions—Summary speakers will take notes of the most compelling reasons presented by themselves and their partner that are most likely to counter the arguments of their opponents and will rebuild audience connections by refocusing upon the central issue.

Last Shot Instructions—Last Shot speakers choose the one issue which matters the most and use the importance of this issue to frame the final parting shot.

Judging the Debate—Students in the class should be used and be active in judging the debate to determine a winning side based on a rubrics scoring system. The teacher should make copies of the rubrics system for students to use and then the teacher should serve as the timekeeper. When some experience is gained, parents can be invited to participate as judges, using the same rubrics scoring system.

Teacher Rubrics for Evaluating a Mini-Debate

The following are examples of evaluative criteria that the teacher can use to build a rubrics evaluation model for the mini-debate:

Preparation: Preparation includes the research process and the organization of materials to make the presentation.

1. Did the team use the student guide to help organize their research?
2. Did the team coordinate their presentations to minimize redundancy?
3. Did the team prepare appropriate and organized materials to make their presentation?

Evidence: Evidence refers not only to statistics, facts and references to authority, but also to items of common or general knowledge.

1. Did the team show connections between particular events or issues and large social, economic, and/or political concerns, trends or developments?
2. Did the team supply appropriate and sufficient evidence to support its arguments, and apply that evidence clearly and logically?
3. Did the team adequately explain and/or analyze the evidence offered during the debate?

Analysis and Argumentation: Did each team sufficiently address the topic in an organized and consistent manner?

1. Did the team present logical, reasonable, and convincing arguments?
2. Did the team clearly and effectively discuss, explain and evaluate the issues and arguments offered during the debate?
3. Did the team respond directly to opposing arguments, interpretations, and/or analyses, with clear explanations of the weakness of opposing arguments?
4. Did the team apply clear evaluative criteria to the arguments, interpretations, and/or analyses offered during the debate?
5. Did the team demonstrate an understanding of the social, political, and/or economic issues involved in the debate?

Crossfire:

1. Did the debater provide relevant, focused and brief questions?
2. Did the debater respond effectively to questions?
3. Did the debater demonstrate respect for opponents by cooperating in a polite "give and take" without dominating the discussion?

Presentation:

1. Did the debater communicate in a clear, organized, and understandable manner, presenting an easy listening path to follow?
2. Did the debater exemplify the highest standards of language usage, style and vocabulary, avoiding slang, poor grammar, and mispronunciations?
3. Did the speaker use effective body language (poised stage presence, appropriate gestures, facial expression, and eye contact)?
4. Did the speaker use effective oral presentation skills (volume, diction, rate of delivery), and use understandable and persuasive delivery)?
5. Was the debater respectful and courteous to opponents?

Student Tips for Success in the Mini-Debate

1. Each partner should select at least 3 articles from *SIRS Leading Issues* that support their side of the mini-debate.
2. Copy/paste facts, opinions, and examples from each article you read into a blank *Draft Summary* document that will be used to organize information. (pp. 14-16, <http://www.proquestk12.com/lsm/pqelib/pdfs/antiplagguide.pdf>)
3. Organize your presentation onto separate sheets of paper by copying and pasting the best information from the *Draft Summary* document.
4. Organize enough information for your opening statement (3 minutes) and coordinate with your partner to make sure you are not both presenting the same information.
5. Create at least 5 questions that you can ask your opponents during the Crossfires. These should be on sheets of papers or note cards for easy reference.
6. Anticipate that your opponents will ask at least 5 questions in the Crossfires. Prepare answers to them on sheets of paper or note cards. What questions would you ask if you were on the opposing team?
7. Prepare a powerful final conclusive argument/statement which will be written at the end of your debate. This should be no longer than 1 minute. Take notes during the debate to tailor this statement to your team’s strengths and your opponents’ weaknesses.

Student Rubrics Model to Participate and Determine the Debate Winner

| Debate Activities Sequence | Affirmative Score | Negative Score |
|--|-------------------|----------------|
| Scoring-- Convincing = 4; Satisfactory = 2; Little Impact = 1 | | |
| Affirmative (Pro Issue) Speaker 1 | | |
| Negative (Con Issue) Speaker 1 | | |
| Crossfire for the Affirmative (Pro Issue) | | |
| Crossfire for the Negative (Con Issue) | | |
| Affirmative (Pro Issue) Speaker 2 | | |
| Negative (Con Issue) Speaker 2 | | |
| Crossfire for the Affirmative (Pro Issue) | | |
| Crossfire for the Negative (Con Issue) | | |
| Affirmative Speaker 1 (Pro Issue) Summary | | |
| Negative Speaker 1 (Con Issue) Summary | | |
| Grand Crossfire (all speakers) for the Affirmative (Pro) | | |
| Grand Crossfire (all speakers) for the Negative (Con) | | |
| Affirmative Speaker 2 (Pro Issue) Last Shot | | |
| Negative Speaker 2 (Con Issue) Last Shot | | |

Student Evaluator:

Totals

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