



GREAT DEBATES

Purpose:

Debates are one of the most effective methods to prove understanding of a content, utilize evidence to support one's point of view, and create a classroom atmosphere which is conducive to an organized exchange of ideas.

Procedure:

Several formats can be taken to introduce formal debates, however, here are some tips that apply to any format:

- Debates based on available research, readings, data, evidence, primary sources, etc. are superior to debates based solely on the opinions of students.
- Debates which require students to frequently assume the viewpoint that is opposite of their own stretch the critical thinking skills much further than debates in which students assume sides that merely support their original opinions.
- Debates conducted with pre-established time periods for each speaker are preferable.
- Debates which allow for teamwork are most effective.
- Debates do not have to be time-consuming to the class time. Preparation can be achieved through homework assignments.
- Debates which call for students to make judgment calls or arrive at solutions to problems are very effective in building analytical skills.

Here are some various formats for debates:

- ❖ Utilize the "You Decide" strategy which involves two individuals debating before a neutral party.
- ❖ Utilize an adaptation of the classic "Cross-Examination" format for debates, which involves two teams of two members each. Members are responsible for a planned speech, an impromptu question/answer period, and an impromptu rebuttal. The following speaking order and time recommendations can be used within one class period:

Team A, Speaker 1.	Opening Prepared Statement	(3 minutes)
Team B, Speaker 2.	Asks questions of Speaker 1.	(1 minutes)
Team B, Speaker 1.	Opening Prepared Statement	(3 minutes)
Team A, Speaker 1.	Asks questions of the previous speaker	(1 minute)
Team A, Speaker 2.	Responds (impromptu rebuttal)	(2 minutes)
Team B, Speaker 2.	Responds (impromptu rebuttal)	(2 minutes)