

Appendix 5

Suggestions for Conducting a Debate

Although debates can take many forms, the following procedures have proven particularly effective in many classrooms. You have a choice of two options: the formal debate and the informal debate.

Option 1: Formal Debate

JUDGES

At least three members of the class should serve as judges (or, preferably, you will invite three people from outside the class). One of the judges should be assigned as the *timekeeper* and should monitor the length of each of the presentations. A second judge should act as the *presiding judge* and should supervise the proceedings. This person will be responsible for keeping the debate orderly and for calling on the presenters in turn.

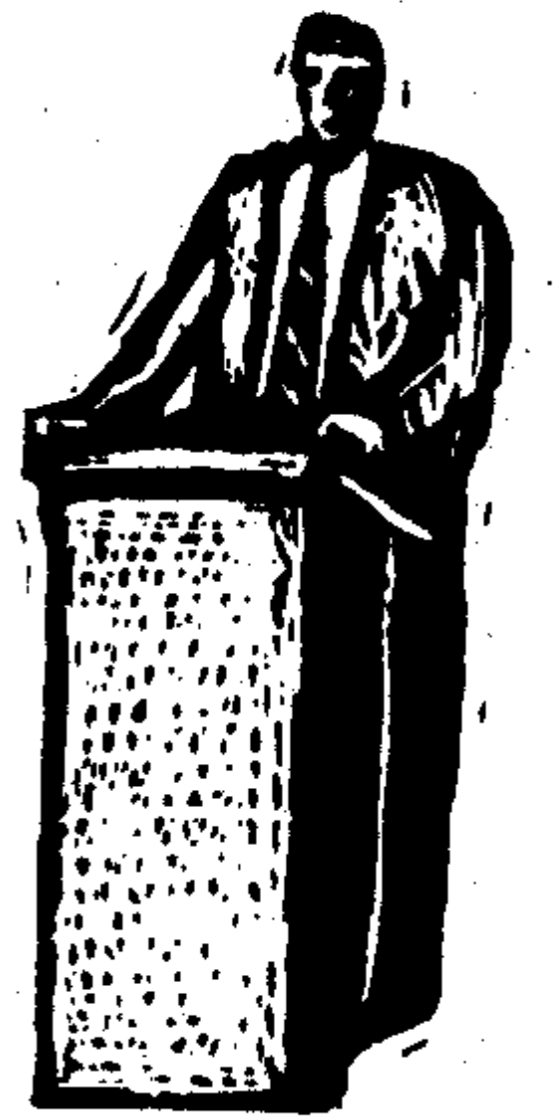
TEAMS

After the judges have been selected, the remainder of the class should form two equal teams—one supporting the debate statement and the other opposing it. Each team should elect a *coordinator* who will organize the team members. Team members should also elect a *recorder* who will take notes on the group's activities and decisions.

PREPARING FOR THE DEBATE

Team members will meet to develop the arguments for their position. Each team will first make a list of the major arguments (or abbreviated statements) supporting its position. The coordinator will review the list to make sure that all the important arguments have been included and that no argument is duplicated. There should be as many arguments as there are team members. If there are too many arguments, the least important should be eliminated. If there are too few, additional ones should be developed. Option: In addition to the lists, you could require students to prepare a group position paper to help them strengthen and organize their arguments.

Each team will make a copy of its list to exchange with the other team. Each team member will select a statement from the list to develop into a 3-minute argument. He or she will also select an argument from the list submitted by the other team and will prepare a 3-minute rebuttal. Each person will thus be responsible for two arguments: one that supports the team's position and another that answers or refutes the other team's arguments.



THE DEBATE

The debaters should make their presentations in the following order:

- Team 1 presents argument (3 minutes)
- Team 2 presents rebuttal (3 minutes)
- Team 2 presents argument (3 minutes)
- Team 1 presents rebuttal (3 minutes)

The sequence is repeated until all debaters have presented their arguments and rebuttals. A 5-minute summation is then given by a member (usually the coordinator) of each team. This summation reiterates the most important points made by the team members.

JUDGING METHOD A

A convenient method for judging the debate is to evaluate each set of arguments in turn. After an argument and counterargument are presented, the judges will determine which one of the debaters delivered the most effective and convincing argument. Each judge will set up a score sheet similar to that shown on the next page and will assign points as follows:

- 4 points = Excellent
- 3 points = Good
- 2 points = Fair
- 1 point = Poor