**Policy Debate Directions**

**EVENT DESCRIPTION:**

Public Forum Debate involves opposing teams of two, debating a topic concerning a current event. Proceeding a coin toss, the winners choose which side to debate (PRO or CON) or which speaker position they prefer (1st or 2nd), and the other team receives the remaining option. Students present cases, engage in rebuttal and refutation, and also participate in a “crossfire” (similar to a cross-examination) with the opportunity to question the opposing team. Often, community members are recruited

to judge this event.

**\*THE DAY CLASS MEETS, ENGELBERT WILL DECIDE IF YOU AND YOUR PARTNER ARE ARGUING PROS OR CONS**

**WHAT DOES A POLICY DEBATE LOOK LIKE?**

Check out this You Tube Clip. It’s REALLY LONG—We will be shortening our format. The actual opening arguments begin at 8 minutes 10 seconds.

SAMPLE: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HXGNNhOxrBw&t=1249s>

**OUR MODIFIED FORMAT:**

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| TEAM PRO  | 4 min | Opening Argument for death penalty |
| TEAM CON | 4 min | Opening argument against death penalty |
| CROSSFIRE | 3 min | Teams take turns asking clarifying questions of each other.  |
| PRO SIDE REBUTTAL | 4 min | Pro side refute’s con’s evidence/POV |
| CON SIDE REBUTTAL | 4 min | Con side refute’s pro’s evidence/POV |
| CROSSFIRE | 3 min | Teams take turns asking clarifying questions of each other or defending original statements |
| TEAM PRO SUMMARY | 2 min | Team pro adds additional evidence/repeats strongest argument using rhetorical appeals |
| TEAM CON SUMMARY | 2 min | Team con adds additional evidence/repeats strongest argument using rhetorical appeals |
| CROSSFIRE | 3 min | All four debaters can engage at once to debunk arguments/evidence/controlling impression |
| TEAM PRO | 2 min | Closing Argument |
| TEAM CON | 2 min | Closing Argument |

**TOTAL DEBATE TIME: 34 minutes**

**We will complete 2 debate in one class period. These debates will take place Wednesday, March 6th and Friday, March 8th.**

**Please come to class dressed to impress. We will have guest judges, as well as your classmates, evaluate you.**

**CLAIM: THE UNITED STATE SHOULD ALLOW INDIVIDUAL STATES TO IMPLEMENT THE DEATH PENALTY.**

**STEP 1: COLLECT RESEARCH**

Collect all the pertinient information you can reagarding the topic. REMEMEBER: You have to be prepared to support and debunk both sides. Here are some guiding questions/arguments to ask/support for both sides:

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| --- | --- |
| IN FAVOR OF | AGAINST |
| -Biblical Argument “eye for an eye”-Used to deter crime-governed by the constitution-families deserve closure-no such thing as “rehabilitation” | -More expensive than life in jail?-“cruel and unusual”-possible to execute an innocent-mentally il/where does responsibility lie-dsicriminatory |

*\*This is not an exhaustive list—it is merely a jumping off point. Also there is opposing research concerning the price of keeping someone in prison for life vs the cost of court appeals, so make sure yor sources for this argument are good.*

PROCESS: I SUGGEST WORKING WITH YOUR PARTNER(S) AND DIVIDING THE WORKLOAD. ONE PARTNER CAN COLLECT INFO ON THE PROS WHILE ANOTHER PARTNER CAN COLLECT INFO ON CONS. ANY INFORMATION IF FAIR GAME, SO DON’T ALWAYS ASSUME THAT YOUR CLASSMATES WILL ONLY PULL INFORMATION FROM THE WEBSITES WE SHARED.

**STEP 2: ORGANIZE YOUR ARGUMENT**

Like a lawyer, figure out your 2-3 strongest pieces of evidence to support your side for the **opening argument**. (Remember to prepare both sides.) Agreat organizational structure for the opening would be SUPER smiliar to an argument essay: hook, 2-3 reasons with supporting evidence, and a recap. Feel free to throw in some rhetorical appeals here. Do you want to open by inspiring pathos in the jury of judges by opening with an ancedote about a person who was wrongfully put to death? Do you want to use logos by citing percentages of people in favor of the death penalty (bandwagon strategy), or do you want to use ethos by citing pyschologists opinions on whether or not people can truly change? CHOOSE THE ARGUMENTS THAT ARE STRONGEST for the opening!

Next, prepare to go into more depth in **the summary round**. Time permitting, you can add more sources or use the time to clarify you points that the other team attempted to discredit in the **crossfire round**. Also, have additional points read to debunk the other team. You may or may not end up using these points.

Finally, figure out what your conclusion will be. Call back to your strongest points. Reiterate your opening hook. You can also discredit your opposer’s argument here. Think about what the last impression you want the jury to have.

**STEP 3: ANTICIPATE YOUR OPPONENTS MOVES**

Now, this is really hard to prepare for outside of the round. I suggest you have partner A present opening arguments, and the other partner (B) takes notes. At the end of the four minute practice round, partner Bwill debunk or question partner A. This way, you are essentially practicing for the crossfire and rebuttal rounds.

**ABOUT THE CROSSFIRE AND REBUTTAL ROUNDS**. Let’s say the PRO side goes first. While the PRO side is presenting their argument, the CON side takes notes on what they need clarification on or can poke holes in. Now, during the first crossfire round, the PRO side may ONLY ask clarifying questions about the CON’s argument, and vice versa.

During the **REBUTTAL round**, the PRO side will criticize, debunk, or otherwise tear apart the CON side’s argument. “My opponent has grossly undestimated the popular opinion of the American people. They mentioned that Committee for Fair and Equal Rights reported that a negligable 20% of people are in favor of the death penalty. According to the Pew Research Center, the number of Americans ages 50-80 who support the death penalty is 88%. This data was collected in 2018 as opposed to my opponent’s figures which were recorded in the late 70’s.” (I made this stuff up-I just want to give you example of the sort of stuff you can say/use additional research to “out” prove your opponent.

Always take notes on the other team’s strategy/evidence. If you can devalue their argument, do it! However, remember that your are encouraaged to destroy your opponent’s argument; not them as people.

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| **ON DEBATE DAY:*** Have your opening argument already written out. Practice reading it aloud and making eye contact. You can read from notes or a computer.
* Take notes when the opponet is arguing.
* For your closing argument, have your points ready to go, but don’t be afraid to adjust it. For example, maybe your strongest argument was weakened by your opponent, or maybe you want to mention your opponent’s faulty reasoning. It’s not a bad lidea to mention “Once again, my opponent is wrong because……I am right because…..”. Only, instead of saying I, use the actual pro or con side.
* Decide ahead of time who is presenting in which step of the debate. Is partner A responsible for the opening and partner B the conclusion? Are you tag teaming? Time yourselves and pracice delivering the sections to fit within the time constraints.
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**MOST IMPORTANTLY: HAVE FUN!**