



# How Have a Classroom Debate



Although debates can be a very formal process, the classroom teacher can exercise some flexibility as to how the classroom debate will function. Rules regarding debates will differ depending upon the country. These instructions focus on learning how to debate at the classroom level.

## 3 Groups:

There will be a ***for*** group, an ***against*** group and a judge or judges. These groups can also be referred to as the ***affirmative*** group and the ***opposing*** group. There must be the same number of individuals on the ***for*** and on the ***against*** group. The teacher will decide whether there will be one judge or more than one judge. If the teacher is not acting as the chair person, then one can be assigned. Role is described on Debate Format.

## Research:

Each group is required to research the debate topic to support their position. Points are given for being able to defend with evidence and being able to answer questions strongly and with convincing evidence. It doesn't necessarily matter which team wins.

## Format:

First, the for group presents, then the against group presents. Each group gets approximately three minutes to present their side. (Explain the plan, why it's needed or not needed and provide an overall summary with a strong argument for or against. The against group will raise questions about the for group's position and provide convincing information against the position. Then each group has a chance for a first and second rebuttal. NOBODY interrupts. It is helpful to use a stop watch and allow 2-3 minutes for each rebuttal.

## Assessment:

Use the rubric to assess the ability of each group to justify, reason and defend the positions of each debate group.

Rational and evidence are more important than opinions.

Debating provides students with a structured way to argue. Points should be given for listening, not interrupting and to adhering to the rules for debating.

**Outcomes:** Whether the teacher appoints judges, is the judge or if the audience will act as judges, the rubrics should be used and the outcome can be 'Win, Lose or Draw'