

Types of Debate

1. Team Policy Debate

Policy debate is one of the oldest formats of collegiate debate practiced in the U.S. It is a 2 v 2 format. Each debater speaks twice: a 'constructive' speech that presents research-based arguments and a 'rebuttal' speech that advances a strategically relevant portion of those arguments while responding to the other team's answers. Each debate round also involves a lively 'cross-examination' period, between constructive speeches, where debaters ask each other questions. The affirmative team typically recommends a plan of action that proves by example that the resolution is true. The negative team will often try to prove that the affirmative proposal is unworkable and disadvantageous. Both affirmative and negative teams will also sometimes engage in broader discussions about the paradigms and norms that inform the understanding of the resolution. In these cases, arguments will be introduced that make use of philosophy, communications theory, and cultural studies. Policy debate involves advance strategy, cultivates critical thinking skills, and trains students to make use of cutting-edge academic theory in a wide variety of disciplines.

2. Cross-Examination Debate

It allows students to focus on a single debate topic each year; thereby becoming "subject-matter-experts." Topics typically call for a policy change by the U.S. government. Debaters work in pairs (teams) to address the current topic, "Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase its economic and/or diplomatic engagement with the People's Republic of China." either from the affirmative side (to propose a plan to solve a problem with the topic), or the negative side (to prove how the affirmative's plan is flawed). Argumentation includes a constructive case, cross-examination, and refutation.

3. Lincoln-Douglas debate

It is one-on-one debate on value resolutions on a predetermined resolution. The affirmative speaker attempts to prove a resolution true and the negative tries to prove the resolution false. Both the affirmative and negative debater should advance a value, measured by criteria, and proven by contentions composed of arguments supported by logic and evidence. Each debater will support his or her side of the resolution by presenting a value that clashes with and refutes his or her opponent's value. A value is what the debater is arguing that should be most valued in society. A criterion is used by debaters to establish a standard by which to determine if the debater's contentions support the debater's value.

4. Spontaneous Argumentation

SPAR Debate is an excellent way to introduce students to debating in the classroom. It's an activity for getting students initially exposed to debating, but also for isolating and introducing the key elements of academic argumentation. It can be used with minimal research, and is therefore a very good format for getting students up and arguing. Moreover, SPAR Debate can be used with academic issues, as a way to

begin to immerse students in curricular content, or with non-academic issues, as a way to focus on debating format and individual argumentation skills.

5. Public Forum Debate

Public Forum Debate is a team event that advocates or rejects a position posed by the monthly resolution topic. The clash of ideas must be communicated in a manner persuasive to the non-specialist or "citizen judge", i.e. a member of the American jury. The debate should:

- Display solid logic, lucid reasoning, and depth of analysis
- Utilize evidence without being driven by it
- Present a clash of ideas by countering/refuting arguments of the opposing team (rebuttal)
- Communicate ideas with clarity, organization, eloquence, and professional decorum

6. Parliamentary Debate

Parliamentary debate is an academic debate event. Many university-level institutions in English-speaking nations sponsor parliamentary debate teams. In addition the format is currently spreading to the high school level. Despite the name, the parli is not related to debate in governmental parliaments beyond formal speaker titles such as "Opposition Leader" and "Prime Minister". The idea is that when "motions" (ideas for change or concern) are brought before the "house" (the governing body) the discussion should take a certain format so that the playing field is fair.