



C. Constructing cases and speeches

Information and Activity Plans for School Debaters

INTRODUCTION

Previous activities (A) have examined initial analysis of motions and brainstorming to generate ideas for arguments and to guide further research.

We then went on (B) to look at the further research you might do in relation to a debate motion, taking two key areas (of many possibilities) and examining the use of print media and the internet – and the different value that might be attached to data from different sources.

It is now necessary to look at how to construct a case. These sessions examine how to create a logical 'map' of the arguments which the team is going to present and how these might be split between the two team members.

This section then moves on to look at speech writing, although it actually recommends that you **DO NOT WRITE A SPEECH** – which seems somewhat contradictory at first but you will soon see why!

In fact, a key aspect of debating is flexibility – to deal with questions from the other side, rebuttal of the other side's key points, and, in some cases, the motion can be defined in a slightly different way to that which you had identified. All of this may interrupt your 'flow' and means that a typed set-speech of exactly five minutes will not usually serve the debater as well as a more flexible set of pre-written sections, which can be assembled during the debate alongside spontaneous responses to the way the debate is evolving.



Activity C1 – What does a good debate case look like?

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session students should be able to:

- Identify the structure for a good debating case (and how this links to the 'speech')
- Identify how to construct the structure of strong arguments

Resources Required

- Flipchart/Blackboard/overhead
- Materials from the previous activities if you have undertaken these
- Printed copies of the relevant worksheets
- The results of activity A1 & 2 – if available

Introduction

This session aims to identify the basic structure of what a more formal debating case/speech might look like, and what individual arguments may look like within that case.

The principles of a good debating speech are in many ways similar to the essay skills students may already have, so where possible link to this prior knowledge and experience.

Running the Activity

PART 1

1. Ask the students what the structure of a good speech might look like. Start recording the result on a whiteboard/flipchart/overhead
2. It is important that you record what is actually said by the group, but by using prompt questions and leaving gaps on your model to be filled in later try to guide them towards the structure suggested in the accompanying worksheet
3. Once most of the main elements have been identified issue the worksheets to students with the overall case structure and the definitions on (do not give them the examples at this stage) and ask them to identify the similarities and differences with their own model



PART 2

4. Tell the students that they are going to practise these skills using the following motion:

This house believes drivers should pay per mile

5. Splitting them into groups as appropriate, issue them with the worksheet containing the blank template for use in constructing an argument
6. Ask them each to develop one sample argument
7. Ask them to imagine what research sources they might use for information – they don't have to look up actual facts and figures, but should indicate what types of information they may need and how they would source it
8. A completed example is provided. This can be used at any stage in the exercise if students are not progressing quickly in developing their own, or can be handed out at the end as a model answer.

Assessing Progress

- Did the students manage to develop a model broadly similar to the example provided? What level of prompting was required?
- Could they identify differences and similarities, and valid reasons for them, between their model and the suggested format?
- Did the students develop arguments in the format suggested in the template? How did these compare with the worked example provided?



Finishing Up

To close the session emphasise to the students:

- Why structure is important
- The similarity with essay writing
- That as they become more experienced they will adapt the style and become more flexible, but that this is a useful model to use in starting out
- That another important aspect of debating is the TEAM EFFORT – care should be taken to ensure that each speaker compliments the others and that there is logical divide in their arguments – using the example used in the session, *'I will deal with the environmental damage caused by CO₂ while my colleague will discuss how the tax will be collected and the revenue raised used'* or *'I will deal with the policy implications whilst my colleague will deal with the financial implications'*
- That in a 'real' competitive debate one might have several 'worked out' arguments for each speaker, and have them on separate pieces of paper or card – this allows them to construct their final speech depending on the exact definition offered and what the opposing side have said – you may end up with arguments worked out to counter every opposition argument identified through 'brainstorming' (activity A1)
- The importance of linking arguments, the main case, the two team speeches, and to material used by the other team – it is this linkage which will help present a coherent case that will impress the audience and judges

Variations

- If you are short of time you can issue the structure worksheet at the start of the session, rather than have the students develop it, and progress immediately to Part 2 – although it should be noted this can reduce the 'buy-in' of the group to the structure



WORKSHEET - STRUCTURE OF A DEBATE CASE & ARGUMENTS

- NB:**
- Definitions of terms used and further information are on the following page
 - This structure is for guidance only. If the debate speech appears too 'mechanical' (as if someone is following a set structure) it is likely to be marked down, however, this provides a useful summary of an approach that is likely to be effective

INTRODUCTION

(1 minute – protected from interruption)

- Define (repeat) the interpretation of the motion
- Define/repeat roles of speakers
- Identify the arguments (by their handles) you will set out
- Rebut arguments of the other side (unless you are first speaker of the debate)

MAIN SPEECH

(4 minutes – other side can ask questions – you can probably cover 2 to 4 key points)

Argument 1

Handle

Development

Evidence/Analysis

Link to handle

Link to main case

Argument 2

Handle

Development

Evidence/Analysis

Link to handle

Link to main case

Argument 3

Handle

Development

Evidence/Analysis

Link to handle

Link to main case

CLOSE

(1 minute – protected from interruption)

- Reiterate the arguments (by their handles) you have set out
- Link to next/previous speaker
- Statement of rebuttal
- Conclude on final statement of case



WORKSHEET – DEFINITION OF TERMS

Handle	This is a short phrase or sentence that identifies each of the key arguments in the debate. These should be 'snappy' enough to stick in the mind of the audience and judges and clearly identify what is about to be/has been discussed
Development	The Handle should be briefly developed into a formal argument of position
Evidence/Analysis	Once it is clearly established what is being proposed the position should be supported with facts, statistics, evidence, or examples – to convince the audience and judges of the merit of the position
Link to handle	This should then be clearly linked back to the handle – ensuring that the point has been 'driven home' to the audience and the judges
Link to main case	Finally, each argument should be linked back briefly to the overall case of that speaker and team, so that the arguments build into a compelling overall case



WORKSHEET – BLANK ‘ARGUMENT’ TEMPLATE

Practising the Development of Arguments

Handle
Development
Evidence/ Analysis
Link to handle
Link to main case



WORKSHEET – ‘ARGUMENT’ EXAMPLE

MOTION	This house believes drivers should pay per mile
Handle	CO ₂ from cars is slowly poisoning people and the environment
Development	Cars are one of the prime causes of CO ₂ emissions in the UK, and their percentage contribution continues to rise as more people drive bigger cars, drive them more often and for longer distances. This is damaging our health and the environment.
Evidence/Analysis	A recent EU sponsored independent study estimates that the UK is the highest producer of CO ₂ per head of the population in Europe. More interestingly the World Health Organisation shows that there is a correlation between CO ₂ emissions from cars in a country and the incidence of a range of illnesses from asthma to cancer. Finally, a 2005 Environmental Protection Agency study of urban parks and water indicated that higher CO ₂ were effecting fish breeding patterns and wildlife diversity.
Link to handle	These authoritative studies clearly indicate that <i>CO₂ from cars is slowly poisoning people and the environment</i>
Link to main case	Combined with our arguments relating to the slow rate of development of cleaner fuels and cars and the failure of the public to invest in these technologies this presents a compelling case for our proposed tax per mile – a low cost and effective incentive to reduce emissions and raise revenue for the development of cleaner technologies

NOTE: The above case is for illustration purposes only, the studies referred to are hypothetical



Activity C2 – Great Speeches...

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session students should be able to:

- Identify the elements which give a speech impact
- Discuss different speaking styles

Resources Required

- Printed copies of the 'Great Speeches' pack
- Copies of the worksheet

Introduction

While the previous activity in this section concentrated on the 'structure' of a good overall case and supporting arguments, this section focuses on the 'craft' that is speech writing.

Although similar, speeches are NOT an essay. The way they are constructed and set out is to ensure maximum impact when delivered verbally – so participants need to be encouraged to practice 'out-loud' all the time to experiment with what works and what doesn't work for them and their speaking style.

This activity draws on some famous speeches; selected because despite the youngest being over twenty years old their impact has remained to this day:

The Gettysburg Address

Abraham Lincoln

I have a dream...

Martin Luther King, Jr,

Blood, toil, tears and sweat...

Sir Winston Churchill

We shall fight them on the beaches...

Sir Winston Churchill

This was their finest hour...

Sir Winston Churchill

The Lady's not for turning...

Margaret Thatcher



Running the Activity

PART 1

1. Divide the students into appropriate groups
2. Give each group TWO DIFFERENT speeches – it is easiest if there is a copy of each speech per person
3. Ask the groups to discuss the questions on the worksheet
4. Once the groups are ready, ask each to report back on their views

PART 2

5. Explain that these are designed to be heard, not read
6. Select two of the shorter examples and ask for volunteers to read them out, putting as much energy and effort into the delivery as possible
7. Did they work better as a speech?

PART 3

8. These speakers all use a lot of energy, careful structure of sentences, and metaphors / similes / clever turns of phrase
9. Ask each individual to take an emotive topic (*'This House would legalise euthanasia'* tends to work well) and develop a single written argument (maybe 1 minute of talking) using:
 - The **structure** outlined in the earlier activity
 - The **style** of the great speeches just examined
10. This is all about the matching of a logical and appropriately developed argument, to how it might be presented stylistically. If the group are confident enough then they can be asked to present their argument to the group, but the primary outcome of the session should be a well written single argument



Assessing Progress

- Could the students identify the styles and devices used to give these speeches impact?
- Were the students able to correctly construct an argument based on the defined structure?
- Did they manage to adapt ideas from the 'great speeches' to refine the way they delivered their argument?

Finishing Up

To close the session emphasise to the students:

- That no-one expects them to write speeches like Winston Churchill or Margaret Thatcher! Or perhaps more correctly, like the professional speech-writers working for these two people.
- But that listening to a variety of speakers (from politicians to the head teacher speaking at assembly!) will give them an understanding of what works and what doesn't, and ideas as to how to develop their own style
- You may also wish to note the great social role of speech and debate, as each of these 'great speeches' was delivered at a defining point in history.

Variations

You can vary the above format in a number of ways:

- With a more confident group you can move to PART 2 immediately, asking individuals to read out some of the speeches and then use the worksheet questions to have a group discussion
- Instead of using our suggested speeches you can ask the students to use the internet to identify 'great speeches'. This can lead to variable quality, but can improve engagement with certain groups as speakers are selected who are more relevant to the individuals in the group.



WORKSHEET – GREAT SPEECHES – QUESTIONS

Read the speeches you have been given and consider the following points:

a. What do you like about the speeches?

b. What don't you like about the speeches?

c. What sentences had the most impact? Why?

d. Which speech do you think makes the most impact? Why?