

# Debate Rubric

Criteria	3 (Excellent)	2 (Satisfactory)	1 (Needs Improvement)
<b>Viewpoint / Organization</b>	Viewpoints are clear, logical, and well-organized. Speaker presents a consistent stance throughout.	Most viewpoints are clear and somewhat organized, with minor lapses in structure.	Viewpoints are unclear, inconsistent, or disorganized.
<b>Use of Facts and Examples</b>	Arguments are well-supported with credible facts, statistics, or real-world examples.	Most arguments include relevant support, though some lack specificity or depth.	Arguments lack factual or evidential support; mostly opinion-based.
<b>Relevance of Supporting Arguments</b>	All supporting arguments are directly relevant to the topic and strengthen the case.	Many, but not all, supporting arguments are relevant and logical.	Few supporting arguments are relevant; reasoning often off-topic.
<b>Strength and Logical Soundness of Arguments</b>	All arguments are strong, well-reasoned, and free of logical fallacies.	Some arguments are convincing, though may include minor reasoning gaps or weak links.	Arguments are not convincing, rely on fallacies, or lack logical connection.
<b>Rebuttal &amp; Engagement</b>	Directly engages with opponent's key points using evidence and analysis.	Addresses some of the opponent's points, but not always effectively.	Ignores or misunderstands opponent's arguments; minimal engagement.
<b>Speaking Voice &amp; Delivery</b>	Voice is clear, confident, and engaging; uses tone and pacing effectively.	Voice is generally clear but lacks variation or confidence.	Voice is difficult to hear or monotone; weak audience engagement.

<b>Preparation &amp; Research</b>	Speaker is thoroughly prepared, demonstrating strong research and familiarity with topic.	Adequately prepared; shows some research but lacks depth in a few areas.	Unprepared or unfamiliar with content; insufficient research evident.
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**Scoring:** Each criterion is rated 1–3. **Total: 21 points maximum.** Convert to percentage or grade as needed.

#### Educational References:

- **ReadWriteThink (IRA/NCTE).** *Classroom Debate Rubric.* Retrieved from [readwritethink.org](http://readwritethink.org).
- **English-Speaking Union (ESU) (2018).** *Public Debate Program Judging Rubric.* Retrieved from [esuus.org](http://esuus.org).
- **University of Glasgow (2023).** *Toolkit for Use of Debate as an Authentic Summative Assessment.* Retrieved from [eprints.gla.ac.uk](http://eprints.gla.ac.uk).
- **Adapted Elements:** Logical soundness, fallacy avoidance, and rebuttal structure inspired by OpenAI's educational model example *DebateSphere Rubric* (ChatGPT, 2025).

# DebateSphere Example

**Session overview:** The system presents a debate statement. The user chooses whether the **AI should argue FOR or AGAINST** the statement. The AI takes the *opposite* stance and conducts a multi-turn debate. After the exchange, the AI evaluates only the **user's** arguments using the platform rubric and produces a report card with feedback.

## Debate Topic

**“Should social media be banned for teenagers under 16?”**

**User choice:** *User selects: AI should speak **FOR** the ban.*

Therefore, **AI will argue AGAINST** the ban.

**AI (AGAINST the ban):** Social media is a vital part of modern communication. It helps teenagers stay informed, learn digital skills, and connect with peers globally. Banning it would isolate them from technological literacy — a skill that's essential for the 21st century.

**User (FOR the ban):** But social media exposes teenagers to cyberbullying, misinformation, and mental health risks. According to the American Psychological Association, teens who spend over 3 hours daily on social media show a 25% higher risk of anxiety and depression. A temporary restriction could help them focus on real-world interactions.

**AI Coach feedback — After user's opening argument:**

Rubric Criterion	Score	Feedback
Viewpoint / Organization	3	Clear and structured: user takes a consistent stance and presents a direct claim.
Use of Facts & Examples	3	Strong citation: American Psychological Association statistic cited; strengthens the claim.
Relevance of Supporting Arguments	3	All points directly relate to harm caused by social media.
Logical Soundness	3	Cause-effect reasoning is coherent; no major fallacies detected.
Rebuttal & Engagement	N/A	Opening round — no opponent rebuttal yet.
Speaking Voice & Delivery	2	Factual and calm; could add rhetorical emphasis for persuasion.
Preparation & Research	3	Demonstrates background reading and use of authoritative sources.

Table 1: \*

Scores: 1 = Needs Improvement, 2 = Satisfactory, 3 = Excellent

**AI (AGAINST the ban):** The data you cited is important, but correlation doesn't always mean causation. Many teenagers use social media for learning and creative expression. Instead of a ban, we should teach digital literacy and responsible use.

**User (FOR the ban):** That's true, but regulation and literacy efforts haven't been effective so far. In 2024, the U.S. Surgeon General declared excessive social media use a public health concern. When even governments recognize the risks, temporary bans might be necessary to protect mental well-being until better safeguards exist.

#### AI Coach feedback — After user's rebuttal:

Rubric Criterion	Score	Feedback
Viewpoint / Organization	3	Maintains consistency and clarity in rebuttal.
Use of Facts & Examples	3	Strong use of an authoritative source (U.S. Surgeon General, 2024).
Relevance of Supporting Arguments	3	Directly counters AI's digital literacy point with policy-level evidence.
Logical Soundness	3	Argument is logically sound and avoids common fallacies.
Rebuttal & Engagement	3	Direct and effective engagement with the AI's main claim.
Speaking Voice & Delivery	3	Confident and assertive delivery in the rebuttal.
Preparation & Research	3	Evidence of good preparation and awareness of policy discourse.

## Final Report Card

Criterion	Round 1	Round 2	Final Score (avg)	Max (3)
Viewpoint / Organization	3	3	3.0	3
Use of Facts & Examples	3	3	3.0	3
Relevance of Supporting Arguments	3	3	3.0	3
Logical Soundness	3	3	3.0	3
Rebuttal & Engagement	N/A	3	3.0	3
Speaking Voice & Delivery	2	3	2.5	3
Preparation & Research	3	3	3.0	3
<b>Total points (sum of final avg)</b>			<b>20.5</b>	<b>21</b>

Table 2: \*

Note: For the rubric we treat N/A as not counted in averaging per-round; final avg shown uses available scores.

**Percentage Score:**  $20.521 \times 100 \approx 97.6\%$

**Visual Performance Bar:**



## AI Coach — Summary Feedback

- **Strengths:** Excellent use of authoritative sources (APA, U.S. Surgeon General) and clear, focused rebuttal. You engaged directly with the AI's main points and defended your thesis with policy-level evidence.
- **Areas to improve:** Delivery in the opening could be more rhetorically persuasive (vary sentence rhythm, add a short anecdote or striking statistic at the start). Continue practicing closing statements that synthesize evidence into a memorable takeaway.
- **Practice tasks:** (1) Write a 20-second opening hook that contains one striking statistic; (2) Prepare one research citation per key claim; (3) Practice a 30-second empathetic pivot to preempt the AI's fairness arguments.