

# DebateSphere Rubric

## Why This Rubric?

The goal of DebateSphere is not just to argue, but to help people **think critically**. This rubric is the “brain” behind the AI coach. It does three important things:

- **Focuses on the process** – not just the final argument.
- **Gives helpful feedback** – so you can keep improving, not just get a grade.
- **Makes thinking skills clear** – breaking them into simple parts anyone can practice.

## The 4 Skills We Measure

We look at arguments through four main skills. Each skill is scored from **1 (Beginning)** to **4 (Advanced)**.

### 1. Logical Soundness & Fallacy Avoidance

Score Level	Description
4 (Advanced)	Arguments are always logical and free of reasoning errors.
3 (Proficient)	Mostly logical, with only small slips that don't undermine the main point.
2 (Developing)	Contains one or more clear fallacies (e.g., Strawman, Ad Hominem).
1 (Beginning)	Argument is mostly fallacious or invalid.

### 2. Evidence & Grounding

Score Level	Description
4 (Advanced)	Every claim is backed with solid, specific, and trustworthy evidence.
3 (Proficient)	Most claims have evidence, though sometimes vague or general.
2 (Developing)	Relies a lot on personal opinion without much support.
1 (Beginning)	Uses weak, speculative, or even false information.

### 3. Structure & Clarity

Score Level	Description
4 (Advanced)	Very clear and well-structured. Has a thesis, supporting points, and conclusion. Language is precise.
3 (Proficient)	Generally clear and organized, though could be tighter.
2 (Developing)	Somewhat messy or hard to follow; main point unclear.
1 (Beginning)	No real structure, difficult to understand.

### 4. Rebuttal & Engagement

Score Level	Description
4 (Advanced)	Directly takes on the opponent's strongest points with evidence or sharp analysis.
3 (Proficient)	Engages with opponent's points but not always the strongest ones.
2 (Developing)	Only challenges weak points (Strawman) or gives irrelevant replies.
1 (Beginning)	Ignores the opponent's points or attacks them personally.

## How This Works in Practice

- **Real-Time AI Coach:** Spots fallacies and gives instant tips (e.g., "This is a slippery slope fallacy, try being more specific").
- **Personal Dashboard:** Shows your progress with:
  - A report card (scores across the 4 skills).
  - Progress charts (how you improve over time).
  - Fallacy list (the errors you make most often).
  - Evidence score (how often you back claims with real proof).

## Final Aim

This rubric ensures that DebateSphere:

- Helps you learn real-world **critical thinking skills**.
- Gives clear and fair **benchmarks for growth**.
- Positions the AI as a **coach, not a crutch**.

## Debate Topic

**“Should governments ban single-use plastics?”**

## User Argument (For Ban)

*“Single-use plastics are destroying the oceans. If we don’t ban them immediately, all marine life will die, and humans will suffer too.”*

## AI Coach Feedback & Scoring

<b>Logical Soundness</b>	2 – Developing: Argument uses a slippery slope fallacy (“all marine life will die”), overstating consequences.
<b>Evidence &amp; Grounding</b>	1 – Beginning: No statistics, studies, or data provided — argument is only opinion-based.
<b>Structure &amp; Clarity</b>	3 – Proficient: Main point (ban plastics) is clear, but reasoning is a bit rushed.
<b>Rebuttal &amp; Engagement</b>	Not applicable yet, since no opponent’s argument given.

## AI Counterargument (Against Ban)

*“While reducing plastic waste is important, banning single-use plastics could increase costs for low-income communities and lead to unintended consequences. Instead, governments should promote recycling and biodegradable alternatives.”*

## User Rebuttal

*“But biodegradable alternatives already exist, and according to a 2023 UN report, countries that phased out single-use plastics saw a 40% drop in ocean waste.”*

## AI Coach Feedback & Scoring

<b>Logical Soundness</b>	4 – Advanced: Reasoning is valid and avoids fallacies.
<b>Evidence &amp; Grounding</b>	4 – Advanced: Excellent use of a specific, credible report (UN, 2023).
<b>Structure &amp; Clarity</b>	4 – Advanced: Very clear structure: claim → evidence → conclusion.
<b>Rebuttal &amp; Engagement</b>	4 – Advanced: Directly addresses the opponent’s cost concern with evidence.

## Final Report Card (User)

<b>Logical Soundness</b>	2 → 4 (improved)
<b>Evidence &amp; Grounding</b>	1 → 4 (strong use of evidence)
<b>Structure &amp; Clarity</b>	3 → 4
<b>Rebuttal &amp; Engagement</b>	4 (excellent rebuttal)