

Debate Rubric

Criteria	3 (Excellent)	2 (Satisfactory)	1 (Needs Improvement)
Viewpoint / Organization	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.
Use of Facts and Examples	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.
Relevance of Supporting Arguments	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.
Strength and Logical Soundness of Arguments	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.
Rebuttal & Engagement	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.
Speaking Voice & Delivery	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.

Preparation & Research	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](https://www.readwritethink.org).
- **English-Speaking Union (ESU) (2018).** *Public Debate Program Judging Rubric*. Retrieved from [esuus.org](https://www.esu.org).
- **University of Glasgow (2023).** *Toolkit for Use of Debate as an Authentic Summative Assessment*. Retrieved from 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
Total points (sum of final avg)			20.5	21

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.