

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. |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|

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.
- **English-Speaking Union (ESU) (2018).** *Public Debate Program Judging Rubric.* Retrieved from esuus.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.