



How to Debate

What is the purpose of debate?

- Explore all possible avenues
- Work out the kinks in an issue
- Clarify pros and cons

How to poke holes in a case:

Opinion: The drinking age at 21 in the USA is a good way to prevent drinking problems later in life.

‘Isn’t it true that most high school students get drunk at least once before turning 21?’

‘Isn’t it true that the rate of alcoholism has not decreased in the last 40 years?’

‘If that were true, why are there so many cases of underage drinking deaths with the drinking age as it is?’

Conceding:

There is no denying that alcoholism is a problem...

While you’re right that many deaths have been caused by underage drinking, I really think...

I’ll admit that alcoholism hasn’t declined much, but...

Topic:

Do violent video games have a negative effect on youth?

It goes without saying that children are far more likely to learn behaviors from their environment than adults or older teens. So, it stands to reason that if children are exposed to violent games at a young age, they may begin to see violence as a solution to their problems, just like it is in games. An analogy would be the way ink shows up more clearly on a white cloth. It's purer, so the effect is stronger. Isn't it true that kids are more impressionable than adults?

If that were true, little kids would be running around outside right now with knives and guns, because violent video games are everywhere. There's certainly no denying that young people are more impressionable than adults, but they are clearly also capable of distinguishing real life from video games. The rules of the game are to shoot and kill. If you do those things, you win. In real life, if you do those things, you lose. Kids aren't stupid. It's up to parents to teach kids what is right and wrong.

Assignment:

Medical testing on animals is right or wrong.

Record yourself explaining both sides of this issue. Give as much detail as you can. Use the expressions from this lesson.