

Step-by-Step Towards Classroom Debating

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Why debate?

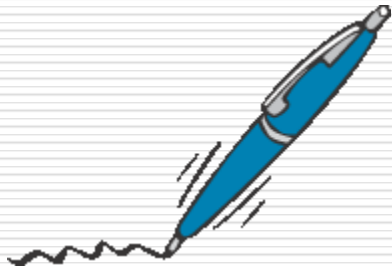
- ❑ Meaningful listening, speaking, and writing practice
 - ❑ Encourages analytic thinking
 - ❑ Develops fluency
 - ❑ High interest – very motivating
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First steps

- This is the bestbecause...
This is the worst ...because...

1. Each student picks an object from his bag.
 2. Allow 5 minutes for listing positive and negative attributes.
 3. Students take turns making minute-long speeches for or against object.
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Example:



This is the best pen!
It's blue and thick. I really
like writing with it! It
writes really smoothly, and
everyone can read my
writing when I write with
it. Everyone likes getting
notes from me when I write
with this pen. Etc. etc.

Getting the idea

□ Yes, and... Yes, but...

1. Choose a topic
 2. One student makes a statement
 3. The next student chooses to agree or disagree.
To agree – Yes, and (add a reason)
To disagree – Yes, but (add an opposing point)
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Example:

A: It's really important to brush your teeth every morning.

B: Yes, **and** when you brush your teeth, your mouth smells good.

C: Yes, **but** sometimes the toothpaste tastes terrible.

D: Yes, **but** you can find a brand that tastes good.

E: Yes, **and** even if it doesn't taste good, you spit it out after a minute!

"I couldn't disagree more!"

- ☐ Students can prepare or improvise
- ☐ Choose a topic – serious or silly

Examples:

Love is more important than money

Free lunches should be provided at school

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- ❑ First student presents one point
 - ❑ Second student says “I couldn’t disagree more, and gives an opposing point
 - ❑ Each student who speaks begins with the same phrase and presents a point opposing the previous speaker
 - ❑ Allow as many students as possible to have a turn
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Example

A: We should all definitely be given free lunches at school every day. We can't be expected to study when we are hungry.

B: I couldn't disagree more! We'll all get fat and feel sleepy if we eat a school lunch every day.

C: I couldn't disagree more! The lunch would probably taste terrible, so we'd only eat enough to stop feeling hungry and we wouldn't get fat.

Ping-Pong Debate

- ☐ Choose a topic
 - ☐ Divide class in half and assign “pro” to one half and “con” to the other
 - ☐ Give students a few minutes to write points for their side (individually)
 - ☐ Choose the first “speaker” from the “pro” side.
 - ☐ The debate goes back and forth between the sides, each student speaking once.
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In Class “Teams Debate”

- ☐ Divide the class into teams of two
 - ☐ Assign each team a position – pro or con
 - ☐ Allow at least 20 minutes for teams to prepare for debate
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Each team prepares 5 main points to support their position.

For each point there should be a few examples.

Procedure

- Fifteen-minutes speeches – alternate pro and con for first argument and then second argument
 - Short break to prepare rebuttal speeches
 - Alternate pro and con rebuttal speeches
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Summing it Up

- ❑ Proceed gradually – in small steps
 - ❑ Students get used to making a logical point and listening to and refuting an opposing point
 - ❑ Encourages civilized, thoughtful discussion
 - ❑ Greatly increases fluency in English and students' self-confidence in their ability to speak.
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Additional resources

- Try these sites for more ideas:
- http://www.kyrene.org/schools/brisas/sunda/debate/teaching_debate.htm
- http://www.educationworld.com/a_lesson/lesson/lesson304.shtml
- <http://www.idebate.org/>