

Say What You Mean: Beginning Debate



By JoJo Tabares
<http://www.ArtofEloquence.com>

Table of Contents

Week 1: Introduction to Beginning Debate

Introduction
Formal Debate Rules
Say What You Mean: Beginning Debate Rules
Grading and Grading Charts

Week 2-6: Basic Speech and Debate Skills

Basic Debate and Speaking Skills
Increasing Interest
Considering the Opposition
Organization
Cross Examination

Week 7-12: Strategies for Proving Your Point

Assumptions and Switching Sides
Confidence
Attacking the affirmative
The Disadvantage
Rebuttals
Critique

Week 13-16: Getting Comfortable Switching Sides

Qualities of a Good Debater
Practice
Skills that Need Improvement

Week 17 & 18: Building Speed

Working on Speed
Working Faster
How Fast Can You Go?

BONUS: Second Semester with Debating the Issues

2nd Semester Debate Course
Option One
Option Two
General Lesson Plan

Art of Eloquence Resources

Debate Links
Other Art of Eloquence Fun Resources
Sample Grading Charts

Week 1: Introduction

“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”-Colossians 4:6

Introduction to Debate

A debate can be anything from a small disagreement between two friends to what Merriam Webster defines as a “*formal discussion of a motion before a deliberative body according to the rules of parliamentary procedure.*” It is the latter we will be discussing in this study.

While most people will never have a need to become involved in a formal debate (or even make a formal speech), understanding the techniques of formal debate can help train you to become more persuasive in daily life. Think about it. How many times have you felt passionately about something, but you lacked the insight, discipline or training to make a good case? How many times have you wished you could persuade someone to adopt your idea, see a particular movie, do something you thought was right, or go somewhere you thought was important? We actually use persuasion skills every day. Do we need formal debate-level persuasion skills every day? No, but would our everyday need for persuasion skills be enhanced by the study of debate? Absolutely!

Debate can be an intimidating word and learning debate can be an intimidating process, but it doesn't have to be! As with every other form of communication skills Art of Eloquence teaches, we know how to make it fun! Why? Because studies show that the more fun people have, the better they'll understand, the more they'll practice and the more effortlessly they'll learn.

Week 2: Basic Speech and Debate Skills

“A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;”-Ecclesiastes 3:7

Week 2 Objectives

<i>Debate Skills to Master</i>	<i>Speaking Skills to Master</i>
Brainstorming	Speaking Clearly
Formulating a Clear and Organized Position	Speaking Loudly Enough
Speaking in Public	Eye Contact
Constructive Speech	Comfort Level

Before beginning lesson two, go over the objectives for the week. This week the class will be learning how to brainstorm the points each side will need to cover in order to prove its case. It is also important to concentrate on presenting a clear and organized position or your debate will wind up in confusion. To this end, the class will use the brainstorming notes to organize their thoughts before they make their speeches. Further, this lesson will help students become comfortable and familiar with public speaking.

Part of learning to present your case in a clear and organized way is to learn how to present a constructive speech. This type of speech is traditionally the first debate speech made by both sides. Its purpose is to make and support your case. Your constructive speech should present your major arguments, give supporting evidence or reasoning for those arguments and it should be presented in a way that is easy for your audience to follow.

Writing your constructive speech is much like writing any short essay. Your constructive speech should have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. The introduction should state your resolution (what you are in favor of or are against) and, for best results, it should be presented in a way that does not put your audience to sleep. The body should contain two or three main “contentions” (arguments) and be supported by various facts or reasons. Your conclusion should nicely and neatly tie your main arguments together by restating your main ideas and ending with a persuasive appeal.

In addition to debating skills, this week we will be concentrating on some speaking skills. After organizing your thoughts, the most important part of giving a speech is to make sure you are speaking clearly and loudly enough so that the rest of the class will both hear and understand. Concentrate on making eye contact with the audience as you speak this week. Look out into the audience (class) and make eye contact with someone for a while. Then, naturally move your gaze to someone else, perhaps on the other side of the room. Practice doing this in a natural way in order to make your audience feel you are speaking directly to them. It takes some amount of practice to do this so don't be upset if it doesn't feel natural right away.

Finally, the more you speak in public, the more comfortable you will become. Even a short two-minute speech will help you become more familiar with making speeches and, as the weeks progress, it will

begin to feel like second nature to you.

Week 2 Lesson

This week, I'd just like to dip our toe into the water by having the class get used to some of the aspects of debate. Next week, we will begin formal debates, but this week I'd like the students to get used to thinking on their feet and making some mini-speeches. Along the way this week, I'm going to suggest some speaking tips and introduce some of the most basic debate skills to master. Let's begin.

What is the best animal to have as a pet? Use a whiteboard or chalkboard to start the class brainstorming the kinds of animals each student feels is the best choice for a pet. Spend about a third, or even half of the class time this week in brainstorming. Under each type of animal begin listing the reasons. For example, a dog makes a great pet because you can pet it and it listens and obeys. A fish makes a great pet because you don't have to walk it every day. A snake makes a great pet. You can leave for a short period of time without having to get someone to pet sit, because a snake only eats once a week.

Next brainstorm the negatives of each animal. For example, a dog doesn't make a good pet because you have to remember to take it for a walk each day and you may have to spend a lot of money on vet bills. A cat doesn't make a good pet because some people are allergic to cats.

Keep brainstorming until you feel the group has enough pets as well as enough positives and negatives for each animal. Leave the brainstorming notes up on the board where all the students can see them. Next, pick one student at a time to give a two-minute speech about which animal he feels makes the best pet. If time permits, have each student give at least one two-minute speech. If the class is too large or the brainstorming took too long, you can just choose a few students to give everyone an idea of how this is done.

Another variation that can be fun, if you have time, is to divide the class in half. Pick one animal and assign one half of the class to the affirmative and the other half to the negative. Have each side pick a few people (who have not yet given a mini speech) to give a two-minute speech for their side. Pick the animal with the most brainstorming notes. Alternate the speeches, starting with the affirmative and alternating with a representative from the negative side, and so on.

As each student comes up to speak, the teacher should make notes on a grading chart about his performance. If you don't want to use them for grading, I do recommend that you still use the charts for feedback. Use the comments section and remind students about the speaking objectives listed above for the week. Look for distracting body language or anything that might take away from the presentation. For example, if one student kept saying "um" or another had a habit of clapping his hands, remind the class that it is just as important to avoid distracting body language as it is to use words and body language to persuade.

Make it fun instead of a critique by sharing tips instead of pointing out flaws. Remind students that each lesson's practice is a chance to improve, and that everyone will have things they will need to work on. Watching others perform their mini speeches will help each student see issues and accomplishments in each other so that all may learn and grow.

Individual Grading Chart

Part of debate rests with each individual and his mini speeches. In order to evaluate each mini speech that has been given this week, I have included a grading chart. This chart makes it easier to understand what to look for in a speech and it allows students to understand what areas of speechmaking they are doing well and what areas they need to work on.

For the sake of space, I have included only two grading charts in each lesson. However, at the end of the book, I have included an entire page of grading charts so that you may print off as many as you like for each week. You may want to cut out each chart and give it to each student as feedback so that they may improve in speaking skills each week.

Topic: _____ Name: _____

Criteria	Possible Points	Points Earned	Comments
Topic Knowledge	10		
General Flow/Easy to Follow	10		
Important Facts Covered	30		
Eye Contact	10		
Volume/Tone	10		
Confidence/Personality	10		
Facial Expression	10		
Body Language	10		
Important Facts Missed	Take off points for any missed		
Total Points	100		
Letter Grade	A, B, C		

Who won the debate, affirmative or negative, and why?

Now that each individual's speeches have been evaluated, which side won? Rather than adding up scores on the grading charts, ask the class to offer up ideas on which side won and to give their reasons. This gives the students a chance to evaluate themselves and to learn what was persuasive: what worked and what didn't.

Take into account things such as the following:

- Convincing points made by both sides
- Important facts missed by either side
- General flow of the arguments
- Anything that detracted from either side's argument
- General feeling of the class and teacher as to which side was more convincing

Debating HW

Each student should take time this week to practice the speaking skills they learned in class. While in everyday conversations, take note of clarity, volume, eye contact and even your comfort level in different conversational situations.

Take extra time to practice those skills you feel you need to work on in front of the mirror, by recording yourselves on video or by role-playing with family members. Get feedback on your progress.

If you like this sample, click here to order Say What You Mean: Beginning Debate Click here:
<http://artofeloquence.com/store/JrSrHigh/SWMDebate>

Other Art of Eloquence Fun Resources

Communication FUNDamentals

JoJo's Blog where she shares articles, Friday Funnies, and news.

<http://artofeloquence.com/blog/>

JoJo's Articles

A growing list of JoJo's best articles on various communication topics.

<http://artofeloquence.com/articles>

What's New at Art of Eloquence

JoJo's eNewsletter featuring exclusive articles, free gifts, giveaways and exclusive offers ONLY for subscribers. <http://artofeloquence.com/newsletter>

Art of Eloquence Facebook Fan Page

Join in on the daily fun on Facebook.

<http://www.facebook.com/ArtofEloquence>

The Misadventures of Foot in Mouth Man (FIMM)

The Art of Eloquence mascot and resident MIScommunicator who sticks his foot in his mouth (for your amusement and “confusement”) so often that he has Athlete's Tongue!

<http://artofeloquence.com/fimm>

Communication Quotes

The Art of Eloquence page of Bible and other quotes on communication skills.

<http://artofeloquence.com/scriptures/>

Art of Eloquence eCatalog of eCourses

A full listing of all speech communication studies offered by Art of Eloquence.

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