

# How to Teach Classroom Debate

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## *Class 1: Ideas (50 mins)*

### Explaining Debate (15 mins)

- **Motion:** A topic that says we should change something in the world.
- **Affirmative team:** Agrees with the motion.
- **Negative team:** Disagrees with the motion.
- **Judges:** Decide which team is the winner.
- **Format:**
  - The Affirmative team will have 1 minute to explain to the Judges why they agree with the motion. The Negative team will have 1 minute to think of an attack to the idea, and 1 minute to explain their attack to the Judges.
  - The Negative team will then have 1 minute to explain to the Judges why they disagree with the motion. The Affirmative team will have 1 minute to think of an attack to the idea, and 1 minute to explain their attack to the Judges.
  - All students will then have 2 minutes of free talk to continue debating.
  - Judges will have 2 minutes to decide which team had the best ideas, English, and energy.

### Motion (10 mins)

- Introduce an interesting topic that changes something in the world. It should be something the students can talk about but not so simple that it discourages creativity or thinking.
  - Topics like “We should not wear school uniforms” are easy to debate but also quite boring.
- Discuss the meaning of the words, give useful background information, and answer questions.

### Idea Maps (20 mins)

- In groups of 2-4 people, students can think of ideas that agree and disagree with the motion. They can write short, connected notes to make an idea map.
- Remind students to think of different groups affected by the motion.
  - Students often think of just their own point of view (children, Japan, people), so help them think of others (adults, the world, companies/government/environment).
- Students can share their ideas on the blackboard or a Chromebook Jamboard.

### Choosing Ideas (5 mins)

- Students will choose two ideas, one that agrees with the motion (Affirmative idea) and one that disagrees (Negative idea).
  - Students should think about which ideas are the strongest, most original, and easiest to say in English.

## Class 2: Explaining (50 mins)

### Speech Patterns (10 mins)

- Groups should use their two ideas from Class 1 to write an Affirmative speech and a Negative speech. Explain the two speech patterns.
- **Affirmative speech pattern** (☹️ + M = 😊) ※M=Motion  
☹️: Talk about a problem we have before doing the motion.  
➤ “We should (*motion*). Now, (*problem*). For example, (*example*).”  
M: Say that the motion (M) will change the problem.  
➤ “But, the motion will change this.”  
😊: Talk about a good thing we have after doing the motion.  
➤ “And, this is good because (*good thing*). For example, (*example*). So, we should (*motion*).”
- **Negative speech pattern** (😊 + M = ☹️)  
😊: Talk about a good thing we have before doing the motion.  
➤ “We should not (*motion*). Now, (*good thing*). For example, (*example*).”  
M: Say that the motion (M) will change the good thing.  
➤ “But, the motion will change this.”  
☹️: Talk about a problem we have after doing the motion.  
➤ “And, this is bad because (*problem*). For example, (*example*). So, we should not (*motion*).”

### Writing Speeches (30 mins)

- Show idea maps from Class 1 again as a reference.
- Remind students to use the English they know. Do not only use Google Translate.

### Attacking (5 mins)

- Explain that, in the debates, students should listen to the other team’s idea and think of problems with it. They should consider if all parts (😊, M, ☹️) are true.
- Remind the students that they don’t need to use perfect English. One word, phrase, or gesture can be a good attack if the Judges understand it.

### Preparing for Debates (5 mins)

- Explain that there will be three rounds of debates in Class 3, and that each team will have a chance to be in the Affirmative, Negative, and Judge roles.
- Groups should decide which members will read their Affirmative and Negative speeches during the debates, and which member will attack the other team’s idea.
- Remind students of the time limits and assign tables and roles for each round.

### *Class 3: Debate (50 mins)*

#### Preparation (5 mins)

- Confirm the table and role assignments for each team.
- Make groups of tables in the shape of a “U” (Affirmative and Negative teams on the left and right of the “U” facing each other, Judges at the bottom of the “U”)
- Encourage the students to use clear ideas, easy English, and good energy.

#### Debate Round 1 (10 mins)

- Affirmative teams will have 1 minute to explain their idea to the Judges. Negative teams will have 1 minute to think of an attack to the idea, and will have 1 minute to explain their attack to the Judges.
- Negative teams will then have 1 minute to explain their idea to the Judges. Affirmative teams will have 1 minute to think of an attack to the idea, and will have 1 minute to explain their attack to the Judges.
- All students will then have 2 minutes of free talk to continue debating.
- Judges will have 2 minutes to decide which team had the best ideas, English, and energy.

#### Post-Debate Check 1 (5 mins)

- Ask the different Judge teams to quickly announce the winners to the class and how they decided (Japanese is ok here).
- Ask the students if there were any words or phrases they wanted to know how to say in English in their debates. Write the English on the blackboard for them.
- Tell the groups to move to their Round 2 tables and roles.

#### Debate Round 2 (10 mins)

- Repeat Round 1 procedures.

#### Post-Debate Check 2 (5 mins)

- Repeat Post-Debate Check 1 procedures.

#### Debate Round 3 (10 mins)

- Repeat Round 1 procedures.

#### Post-Debate Check 3 (5 mins)

- Repeat Post-Debate Check 1 procedures.
- Move the desks back, and end the class.

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Conclusions:

*Education is changing. The internet has replaced teachers as the best source of knowledge, and the days of students studying infinite facts are ending. Teachers have a new, more important job ahead: helping students understand and use the limitless knowledge available to them. Debate is a fantastic way for students to create, analyze, and communicate. To think and not simply memorize. To use English, not just repeat it. For decades, students have been ordered to listen. Now, we should help them talk.*