

Debate Games

Debate Baseball

This activity reinforces basic debate concepts. It is a fun activity that allows you to get a sense of which debate concepts students understand well and which are not as clear to them. Students answer questions in the format of a mock baseball game.

Time Allotment: Approximately 40-60 minutes

Objectives: By the end of this activity, students will review important debate terms and concepts and engage in collaborative learning, reinforcing material to which they have already been introduced.

Materials and Preparation

Write lists of questions that cover the debate concepts and terms that have been introduced to the students. These lists might include concepts that have been introduced in the previous several weeks of class or concepts introduced in textbook readings. Break the questions into four categories: 1) Single (difficult); 2) Double (very difficulty); 3) Triple (second most difficult); 4) Home Run (most difficult). The questions can be made harder or easier depending on the experience level of the students. Make sure that the lists are prepared in a manner that allows you to give a single question, from any category, to the "pitcher" at any give moment. Have the classroom arranged in a manner conducive to the game, with four bases.

Method

Divide the class into two teams. If you would like, have the students name their team. Explain the rules of Debate Baseball to the class. Debate Baseball simulates a baseball game, but is adapted for a classroom review session. Students from the "at bat" team actually step up to the plate. When a student is on the plate, she is given the choice of the category of question they want. For instance, she may say she is interested in a double. Once the student "at bat" has selected a category (difficulty level) for her question, the student the other team has designated as the "pitcher" reads the question from the card you give her.

As the teacher, you will function as an umpire. In this role, you decide whether each student gets the question right or not. If the student misses a question, her team gets an out. If she answers the question and thus gets a "hit", she moves to base that corresponds to the category she selected. In the example where she selects a double, she would move to second base. She would stay there until another member of her team got a hit. At that point, she would advance the same number of bases as does the batter.

As in baseball, when the student gets to home plate, her team receives one point. Record points on the board. After three outs it is the other team's turn to bat. Play as many innings as you have time for and as is pedagogically useful. Unlike baseball, there are no opportunities to tag another student out. Once a student has answered a question accurately, the only way to prevent her from scoring a point is make sure she does not get to the home plate before her team has gotten three outs. Adapt the rules as necessary depending on what is appropriate for your students.

Debate Jeopardy

This activity reinforces basic debate concepts. It is a fun activity that allows you to get a sense of which debate concepts students understand well and which are not as clear to them. It is also an easy way for students to review what they know.

Time Allotment: Approximately one class period

Objectives: By the end of this activity, students will review important debate terms and concepts and engage in collaborative learning, reinforcing material to which they have already been introduced

Materials and Preparation

Create a list of 10 questions for at least 6 categories. It is preferable to have two rounds (10-12) of categories prepared, but time constraints might prevent the class from playing two full rounds. Focus on debate concepts to which students have been introduced. It makes sense to have this activity before the first tournament in order to boost student's confidence and ensure they have reviewed material they will need to know in the average round.

Possible categories include:

- * The affirmative case structure / Stock issues
- * Specific affirmative case arguments
- * Disadvantage structure
- * Specific disadvantage scenarios
- * Critique structure
- * Topicality structure or Specific Topicality arguments
- * Negative Theory
- * Potpourri (which could include flowing, research, and filing)

They may cover concepts that have been introduced in the previous several weeks of class or concepts introduced in a debate textbook that the students have been assigned to read. The questions should be framed just as questions are in jeopardy (i.e. what is _____).

Once the questions have been generated, create a Jeopardy game board: a ten by six column grid. Each column should be labeled with a different category. The rows should be numbered 100 through 1000 (the first question for each category should be the least difficult; the tenth should be the most difficult and they should increase in increments of 100.) If there is time for a second round, it might make sense to have double Jeopardy wherein the point-values of questions are doubled. It may make sense to assign certain squares as daily double squares - wherein the square is actually worth twice the points it would otherwise be worth. The game board does not have to be too fancy - in most situations it makes sense to just use the chalkboard. You may also want prizes (candy, etc.) to reward teams for performing well during the game.