



14.8 Analysis of Judgments

This activity develops judge adaptation and argumentation skills. Students practice "thinking like a judge" by evaluation the arguments in a practice debate using a model flow. This encourages students to weigh different arguments against each other and consider argument interaction in debate.

Time Allotment

One class period

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will:

- think about the process a judge uses to evaluate debate rounds.
- begin to understand the importance of the interaction between different arguments in a round.

Materials and Preparation

Come up with a few model mini-debates that would be a challenge for a judge to decide who won. You can make up controversial scenarios, or you may want to use flows of actual debate rounds that you have judged or observed. Your scenario write-ups should include the issues the judge must weigh at the end of the last rebuttal. You can either describe these scenarios orally to the class, or type up a short handout.

Method

Present the debate decision scenarios to the class in detail. Start with the first, then have a discussion, and move on to the next. Be prepared for some questions of clarification.

In small groups or as a class discuss each scenario. Students should debate and decide who won each scenario, and, most importantly, be able to defend why they made their decision. Emphasize to the students that they should pay attention to who they think won individual arguments in the round, and especially, how those arguments interacted with each other. Their decisions should be based on both of those factors.