

7.2 Introduction to Clash

This activity introduces clash and direct refutation skills. It makes a good lead in to an introductory lesson about clash. Students give short opposing speeches in front of the class and you point out where the arguments clashed and where they didn't.

Time Allotment

20-30 minutes

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will:

- be introduced to the concept of direct refutation.
- be introduced to argument structure and logic.

Method

Divide the class in groups and give each group a proposition to debate. Have them take out a piece of paper and draw a line from top to bottom down the middle. On the top of the left-hand side, students should write "affirmative." On the top of the right-hand side, they should write "negative." Give the students five minutes to come up with and write down as many arguments as they can for both sides of the argument, writing arguments in the appropriate column.

After students have brainstormed arguments on either side of the resolution, it will be time for speeches. Either ask for a volunteer or select a student to argue in favor of the proposition and another to argue against it. Depending on the amount of time available and the comfort students have with public speaking, the speeches should be between two to four minutes. Have a student volunteer to flow the speeches on the chalk board, or flow the speeches yourself.

After the speeches have been given, it is time for a group discussion about clash. Most likely, students will have listed arguments for their position, not directly refuting their opponent's arguments. During the group discussion, you can point out where the arguments clashed and where they did not. Use the black board flow when appropriate to point out the relationship between arguments.

This activity works best when you prepare a short lesson on clash, the importance of direct refutation in debate, and the practice of line-by-line refutation, in advance and use this activity as a lead into that lesson.

This activity can be altered by:

- allowing each group of students to develop their own proposition (topic) to debate.
- using as an activity to practice direct refutation skills, asking students in advance to directly refute the arguments presented by the affirmative speaker.
- using the activity to focus explicitly on line-by-line refutation, asking students from the outset to practice line-by-line skills and giving the negative speaker some preparation time after the affirmative speech to prepare direct responses to each affirmative point.