

7.10 Judge the Chalkboard

This activity builds advanced argumentation and analytical skills. Students are presented with the flow of a debate about an issue and encouraged to think like a judge and come up with a rationale for who won the debate. It is a good introduction for students to think strategically about making and answering off-case arguments, and for thinking about how you win a judge's approval.

Time Allotment

20-30 minutes

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will:

- analyze a debate from the judge's perspective in order to improve strategic decision-making.
- begin to understand the importance of persuasion and clear argumentation in debate.
- understand the importance of line-by-line argumentation.

Materials and Preparation

In preparation for this activity, you will need a flow of mini-debate on a particular issue (or a flow of one issue from a debate round).

Method

Using a flow of a mini-debate or a single argument in a debate (such as a disadvantage, critique, or topicality violation), flow the arguments of the entire debate on the chalkboard before the activity begins.

Have the students read over the flow, then, on a scratch piece of paper, have each student write down which team they think won each individual argument on the flow, and why. When they have finished, have students decide who they think won the entire argument, and which of the individual arguments were most important in winning it.

When they have finished, have a few students present their decisions on who won the arguments and why. Then, have the class discuss and debate the differences in student judgments. Have the students think about how each team could have made different strategic decisions that may have changed the outcome of the debate.

The students should leave with an appreciation of how difficult a judge's position is, and how important it is for them to "make the judge's job easy."