



1.6 Think Like a Judge

This activity introduces the skill of judge adaptation. Students are asked to view debate from the perspective of a judge. The goal is for students to think about debate as an interaction with the audience. Students should also think about how "winning" and "losing" a debate is arbitrary and subject to the thinking of a judge: you must not simply be right, but persuade another that you are right.

Objectives

By the end of this activity, students will:

- think about the criteria that judges will use to evaluate their debates.
- begin to think strategically about how to "win over" judges with technique and reasoning.

Time Allotment

20 minutes

Materials and Preparation

You may want to prepare a list of your own judging techniques and guidelines in advance to stimulate discussion.

Method

Ask students, as a class or in small groups, to imagine that they were supposed to judge a debate round. Assign a student from each group to take notes. Have students brainstorm what guidelines they would use to decide who won the debate round, why they would use the guidelines, and how important they think the guideline should be in decision-making. Possible judging guidelines (both "good" and "bad") could include:

- Unanswered arguments
- Analysis of significance and impacts
- Style or demeanor
- How "realistic" their arguments are.

When the students have completed a list, have them report back to the class on what they decided. Then, have the class decide on a "master list" that a note-taker records. These criteria and guidelines should then be made into a grading sheet or rubric. When students have practice debates, you can use these guidelines and have the rest of the class evaluate and judge the round.