

Introduction to Debate for Juniors



What is **DEBATE**?

Debate is a fun and challenging activity where you and a partner take on another team in a war of arguments, discussing and considering the pros and cons of a contentious issue. It is a game that involves thinking, listening, public speaking, persuasion, creativity, role-playing, and strategy.

Why should **YOU** get involved in Debating?

Not only will you improve in these skills, you will also benefit by developing more self-confidence, better writing skills (which will be really helpful in High School and College/University), and you will be able to better handle those situations in life which call for dealing with conflict (which will be really helpful when you have a career in the future)!. Plus, it is a fun way to meet, connect, and network with other students from your city, province, and country.

How does a **PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE** work?

Both teams prepare to debate over a **RESOLUTION**, or a motion that clearly has two sides to it. For example, a resolution could read: *BE IT RESOLVED THAT this house would ban homework*. The affirmative side, usually referred to as the **GOVERNMENT** would prepare arguments that are in favour or support the resolution, while the negative side, or the **OPPOSITION**, would prepare arguments against it, either completely disagreeing with it or showing that it is unreasonable or flawed.

Each speaker would deliver a speech that develops new arguments, opposes the other side's arguments, and/or defends the arguments that were attacked by the other side. These speeches are called **CONSTRUCTIONS**. Also, one speaker from each side would deliver a brief speech called a **REBUTTAL**, which explains why your side won the debate, and the other has lost. Every speech except the first one will contain **REFUTATION** (or **CLASH**), which is the most important part of the debate!

Who are the **PLAYERS** in a debate?

GOVERNMENT TEAM

Prime Minister: Introduces the resolution and begins the debate. Rebuttal.
Minister of the Crown: Supports and defends the resolution and the PM.

OPPOSITION TEAM

Leader of the Opposition: Attacks the resolution and the PM's arguments. Rebuttal.
Minister Opposite: Supports and defends the LO and attacks the resolution.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

Moderates the debate using a Speaker's Script. All comments are directed towards the Speaker in a debate, and never at an opponent!

CLERK

Times the speeches and gives time signals.

JUDGE(S)

One or more adjudicators who score the debate.

How does a typical debate run?

Speech:	Speaker:	Speech Type:	Time:	Role Fulfillment:
1	Prime Minister	Construction	6 min.	Introduce Resolution, Define terms. present case, give arguments
2	Leader of Opp.	Construction	6 min.	Attack the PM's arguments. Present counter-case. Give arguments
3	Min. of Crown	Construction	6 min.	Defend PM's arguments, attack, LO's arguments, give new argument
4	Member Opp.	Construction	6 min.	Defend LO's arguments, attack entire GOV case, give new argument
			2 min.	Break to prepare Rebuttals
5	Leader of Opp.	Rebuttal	3 min.	Boil down to key issues/themes, prove why OPP has won and GOV has lost.
6	Prime Minister	Rebuttal	3 min.	Boil down to key issues/themes, prove why GOV has won and OPP has lost. (Be sure to address MO's final argument!)

Think of a debate as a verbal tennis match, using several (6) tennis balls!
Each team should prepare 3 arguments to prove their case. A ball represents an argument.



1. Prime Minister:

- Introduction (30 sec)
- Present the resolution and define the terms (30 sec)
- Outline and signpost the case (30 sec)
- Begin **CONSTRUCTION:**
- **Serve Ball #1:** Present and fully explain your first argument (2 min)
- **Serve Ball #2:** Present and fully explain your second argument (2 min)
- Conclusion and Declaration (30 sec)

2. Leader of the Opposition:

- Introduction (30 sec)
- Outline and signpost the counter-case (30 sec)
- Begin **REFUTATION/CLASH:**
- **Return Ball #1:** Explain why this argument is wrong, faulty, or flawed. (1 min)
- **Return Ball #2:** Explain why this argument is wrong, faulty, or flawed. (1 min)
- Begin **CONSTRUCTION:**
- **Serve Ball #3:** Present and fully explain your first counter-argument (1 min)
- **Serve Ball #4:** Present and fully explain your second counter-argument (1 min)
- Conclusion and Declaration (1 min)

3. Minister of the Crown:

- Introduction (30 sec)
- Outline your speech (30 sec)
- **REFUTATION:**
- **DEFENCE- Return Balls #1 & 2:** Fully defend the attack on the PM (1.5 min)
- **ATTACK - Return Balls #3 & 4:** Fully attack the LO's counter-arguments (1.5 min)
- **CONSTRUCTION:**
- **Serve Ball #5:** Present and fully explain your final argument (1 min)
- Conclusion and Declaration (1 min)

4. Member Opposite:

- Introduction (30 sec)
- Outline your speech (30 sec)
- **REFUTATION:**
- **DEFENCE - Return Balls #3 & 4:** Fully defend the attack on the LO (1 min)
- **ATTACK - Return Balls #1, 2, & 5:** Fully attack the entire GOV case (2 min)
- **CONSTRUCTION:**
- **Serve Ball #6:** present and fully explain your final argument (1 min)*
- Conclusion and Declaration (1 min)

- Break for Rebuttal Preparation -

5. Leader of the Opposition Rebuttal:

- Introduction and speech outline (30 sec)
- **KEY** issues, themes, or questions (1.5 min)
- Conclusion: explain why you won and the GOV has lost (30 sec)
- Declaration (30 sec)

6. Prime Minister Rebuttal:

- Introduction and speech outline (30 sec)
- **Key** issues, themes, or questions (1.5 min) (*Be sure to address Ball #6!!)
- Conclusion: explain why you won and the OPP has lost (30 sec)
- Declaration (30 sec)

What are some other key **TERMS** I should know for beginning debating?

CONTENTIONS: Fully developed arguments that make up a case, and contain points and sub-points to prove them. They are supported by analysis, explanation, and evidence.

POI: A Point of Information is a direct question an opposing team can ask during a speech, and is the only time debaters speak directly to each other. They used in more advanced forms of debate.

IMPROMPTU: These are debates with very little time given to prepare, and are based on what you know about the resolution. Evidence from research is not as important as it is in prepared debates.

STYLE: All of the elements in a speech rather than content. A good speaker must consider eye contact, variations in delivery, presence, body language, gesturing, etc. in order to be effective.

CROSS THE FLOOR: After a debate is over, the teams should shake hands as a sign of good sportsmanship. Battle verbally, but don't make enemies!