



CLASSROOM  
DEBATES

# WORLD HISTORY

**CRITICAL THINKING, SPEAKING SKILLS,  
COOPERATIVE LEARNING**

**WORLD HISTORY**

## Contains

- 30 Debate Topics
- Debate Tips
- Debate Glossary
- Debate Score Sheets
- Sample Annotative Bibliography
- Bibliography Style Sheet



**SOCIAL STUDIES  
SCHOOL SERVICE**

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Published by:

**Social Studies School Service**

10200 Jefferson Blvd

P.O. Box 802

Culver City, CA 90232

Phone: (800) 421-4246

[www.socialstudies.com](http://www.socialstudies.com)

ISBN# 978-1-56004-835-0

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# Teacher's Guide

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## INTRODUCTION

Debates encourage critical thinking skills through cooperative learning and help students in forming, presenting, and defending logical arguments. The topics in this publication allow for varying abilities of students, with questions suitable for students who are not college bound, as well as for honors students and college prep students. These debates may be used as a major research project or assignment for the course or semester.

The questions in this collection are structured in the common debate form with two clearly defensible positions; however, they are not structured as in a formal forensic debate class. The authors have purposely stayed away from formal debate jargon, such as, “resolved”, “first affirmative”, etc., as they tend to confuse and intimidate students.

## PROCEDURE

1. Duplicate and distribute “Why Debates Are Beneficial to Students.” Explain the material. Students will generally perform at a higher level when they see the relevance of a project. This handout accomplishes this goal.
2. Duplicate and distribute “Debate Tips” and the “Debate Glossary” to each student. Use these handouts as a guide to improve performance and understand basic terminology.
3. Duplicate and distribute the “Debate Score Sheet- Pro and Con” and the “Debate Format”. Use these handouts to explain how the debates will be graded and what format will be used. The debate format sheet can be modified for different levels of students. For example, for some students, the teacher may wish to reduce the time requirements in round 1 to 4-5 minutes and in round 2 to 2 minutes. It is important for the teacher to explain the debate score sheet carefully to the students. If students know and understand the criteria used to grade their work, they can structure their debate to meet the expectations of the teacher. Teachers should feel free to modify the grading percentages as they wish to meet their individual classroom needs. The authors suggest 40% of the grade be derived from the annotated bibliography. This rewards students for conducting the necessary research for a successful debate and relieves the tension of some students who are apprehensive about making an oral presentation. During the debate, use the score sheet to grade the student presentation. After the debate, use the form to help students understand and evaluate their presentation.
4. Dates and times for the debates should be announced by the teacher at least two weeks in advance. Use the “Debate Sign-up Sheet” for this purpose.

5. Duplicate and distribute the “Sample Annotative Bibliography” and “Bibliography Style” sheets. These handouts will demonstrate the proper form for this assignment. The annotated bibliography is generally due the day of the debate. Assign each group their topic and allow time for research. Students will generally need two weeks of out of class time for research prior to the debate.
6. It is important to select competent students for the first debate. This establishes a pattern for subsequent debates.
7. There are often more questions and student slots than students in the class. The teacher may consider allowing students to sign up for a second debate as extra credit.
8. For debates to be successful, the proper classroom atmosphere must be maintained. Do not allow students to harass or distract the presenter. Students should take notes of the salient points on the “Debate Note Sheet.” If you pit students who have a natural antagonism towards each other on opposite sides of an issue, you will often experience excellent debates exploring many aspects of the question. Competition is a great motivator.
9. The instructor may wish to pass out the “Debate Ballot” at the beginning of the class to gauge initial opinion on the issue. After the debate, take a second vote to see the change in views. This technique is part of the Debate Score Sheet. This is optional. If used, a student or teacher can tabulate the pre-vote during the break between Rounds 1 and 2. The post debate ballots may be tabulated after the class.
10. If possible or desirable, videotape the debate. Student presentation, dress, and enthusiasm increase markedly.
11. The authors have provided questions at the varying ability levels of the students. The teacher should feel free to adapt, modify, or replace questions based on the specific requirements of their curriculum and students. There are more questions than could be used during a normal course. Instructors should pick and choose the questions that best fit their course. Approximately 7-10 debates a semester is normal.
12. These questions are intended as sample. The teacher should feel free to adapt or write entirely new questions based on the specifics of the syllabus. Current events are usually good debate topics.

# Why Debates Are Beneficial to Students

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*“Debate may viewed as an intellectual battle of supremacy between opposing sides of a question. The winner is the combatant who is best prepared and thinks the question through most judiciously.”*

Robert Eugene Lewis

Debate teaches students:

1. library and research skills.
2. analytical and thinking skills.
3. to prove and support statements.
4. to evaluate evidence.
5. to demand proof of statements made by the opposing side.
6. to present ideas in a clear and effective manner.
7. to think under pressure.
8. to work with other students.
9. to make quick and accurate decisions.
10. to anticipate the arguments of the opposing side and how to counter them.

# Debate Format

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## General Rules

1. 7 minutes per student in round one and 3 minutes per student in round two.
2. No interference with the speaker.
3. The speaker may use the podium.
4. 2 rounds per debate.
5. No new information is presented in Round 2.
6. 2-3 minute conference between rounds.

## Round 1—Order of Presentation: Pro, Con, Pro, Con

Person #1 for each side

1. Restate question.
2. Explain why it is important.
3. General reasons for position.
4. Present any emotional reading or quote.
5. Passion appeal.

Person #2 for each side

1. Present data, case studies.
2. Specific support for your arguments.
3. Intellectual appeal.

**Break**—Debate teams should study notes and plan attack of the opposing side.

## Round 2—Order of Presentation: Con, Pro, Con, Pro

Person #1 for each side

1. Attack and reiterate.
2. Appeal should be both passionate and intellectual.

Person #2 for each side

1. Summarize your position and evidence.
2. Take the moral high ground.

## Questions from the class

# Debate Score Sheet—Pro Position

.....

Debate Topic \_\_\_\_\_

Team \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

## Categories & Percentage Points

Pre-Vote \_\_\_\_\_ Post-Vote \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Annotated Bibliography (Min. 3 Sources) (40% of Grade)**

2. **Presentation (30% of Grade) Factors**

- A. Was debate rehearsed
- B. Audibility
- C. Read or explained
- D. Organization
- E. Debate addressed to audience
- F. Use of time
- G. Persuasiveness
- H. Thesis clearly defined and explained

3. **Rebuttal to Opponents (20% of Grade)**

4. **Answer to Questions (10% of Grade)**

5. **Additional Comments (On Back)**

# Debate Score Sheet—Con Position

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Debate Topic \_\_\_\_\_

Team \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

## Categories & % Points

Pre-Vote \_\_\_\_\_ Post-Vote \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Annotated Bibliography (Min. 3 Sources) (40% of Grade)

### 2. Presentation (30% of Grade) Factors

- A. Was debate rehearsed
- B. Audibility
- C. Read or explained
- D. Organization
- E. Debate addressed to audience
- F. Use of time
- G. Persuasiveness
- H. Thesis clearly defined and explained

### 3. Rebuttal to Opponents (20% of Grade)

### 4. Answer to Questions (10% of Grade)

### 5. Additional Comments (On Back)



## Debate Tips

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1. Research your topic thoroughly. This includes both the pro and con positions.
2. Organize your ideas.
3. Be as precise as possible. Choose your words carefully.
4. Make your presentation sound spontaneous. Do not read an essay for the class.  
You may use notecards or an outline sheet.
5. Define terms to your advantage.
6. Anticipate your opponent's main points.
7. Have a strong opening and conclusion.
8. Use quotes from experts. (Don't overdo this)
9. Use statistics from experts. (Don't overdo this)
10. It is occasionally useful to use the board or overhead to emphasize points.
11. Rehearse your presentation and use time accordingly.
12. Be confident and avoid talking in a monotone.
13. Address your presentation to the audience, not your opponents.
14. Dress well and be rested.

# Debate Glossary

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<b>Advocate</b>	One who pleads a cause or defends a particular policy. One who defends a position.
<b>Analogy</b>	An argument which seeks to draw comparisons or parallels to another event for analysis.
<b>Analysis</b>	The process of breaking down arguments into their component parts for assessment.
<b>Argument</b>	An offer of proof for your position or against the opposing side in a debate or discussion.
<b>Assertion</b>	A statement which lacks support as to its correctness.
<b>Authority</b>	One whose judgment is accepted as decisive.
<b>Bias</b>	A prejudice or inclination to favor one side over another.
<b>Causation</b>	A reason that prompts an action. An event which causes another event to occur.
<b>Credibility</b>	The believability of a source.
<b>Debate</b>	A structured contest where participants argue opposing sides of a proposition.
<b>Deduction</b>	A statement derived through reasoning.
<b>Empirical Evidence</b>	Factual evidence that can be verified by proof including experiments, experience, or statistics.
<b>Evidence</b>	That which furnishes proof or gives grounds for belief.
<b>Expert</b>	A recognized authority in a particular field.
<b>Fact</b>	Anything actually done or existing. Acts that bear upon the allegation.
<b>Fallacy</b>	A mistaken assumption.
<b>Issue</b>	A point of contention. A major point of disagreement.
<b>Normative Evidence</b>	A widely held belief that may not be supported by empirical data. Example: All people should go to college.
<b>Opinion</b>	A belief or judgment. Opinion evidence is acceptable in a debate if it is from an authority in the field.
<b>Probability</b>	That which is likely to happen. An inference that can be drawn to establish the likelihood of an event.
<b>Proof</b>	A check or test to ascertain the validity of a statement or argument.

<b>Reasoning</b>	Drawing conclusion based on the evidence presented or examined.
<b>Rebuttal</b>	Arguments used to refute the opposing side.
<b>Statistics</b>	The use of numbers and figures in explaining or classifying facts.
<b>Value</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Determining the relative importance or worth of an argument.</li><li>2. An underlying belief held by society such as a high regard for honesty and integrity.</li></ol>

# Sample Annotative Bibliography

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Bailey, Stephen K. *Congress at Work*. Conn.: Henry Holt and Company, 1959.

Bailey believes that, contrary to public opinion, Congress can move quickly in times of crisis. He uses as an example to support this the Emergency Banking Act of 1933. He also believes that people's misconceptions about Congress are caused by their lack of understanding of it.

"Veto". The Encyclopaedia Britannica. Macropedia. (1987).

We looked up "veto" in this encyclopedia in order to learn more about it and how it is used. Since the founding fathers wrote the Constitution of the United States, the power of the veto was given to the President as a means of a check on legislative acts. this check has proved to be very effective. Since that time, only three to four percent of the Presidential vetoes have been overridden by Congress. This fact and many others that were present here helped us to learn that if the President was given the power of a line-item veto, it would in essence be giving the executive branch legislative powers. Because only a small percentage of vetoes are overridden, a President could have a field day vetoing bills to favor his or his party's needs.

"The Item Veto: A Bad Idea That Lives On". America. June 15, 1985. p.492:

In this article, many aspects about a Presidential line-item veto are discussed. To begin with, this article explains what a line-item veto is. It then states how it can be used against pork-barrel legislation. But it stresses the fact that pork-barrel legislation would not be a major factor in the item-veto because first, it wouldn't have a major effect on the budget, and second that the President will leave the pork-barrel legislation untouched by the veto if it favors his or his party's thoughts. The article backs this statement with many statistics on spending and vetoes.

**An annotative bibliography lists the bibliographical reference and then summarizes the information from the reference.**

# Bibliography Style

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## **Book with a SINGLE AUTHOR**

Bailey, Stephen K. *Congress at Work*. Conn.: Henry Holt and Company, 1959.

## **Book with an EDITOR instead of an author**

Gibson, James, ed. *The Complete Poems of Thomas Hardy*. New York: Macmillan, 1976.

## **Book with TWO AUTHORS**

Link, Arthur S., and William B. Catton. *American Epoch: A History of the United States Since 1890*. New York: Knopf, 1963.

## **Book with THREE AUTHORS**

Adams, William, Peter Coh, and Barry Slepian. *Afro-American Literature: Drama*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970.

## **Book with FOUR or MORE AUTHORS**

Goldner, Orville, et al. *The Making of King Kong*. New York: Ballantine, 1975.

## **Book with CORPORATE AUTHOR**

United Nations, *Statistical Yearbook*. 1978. New York: United Nations, 1979.

## **MICROFORM**

"Watch Out for Food Poisoning" (Microfilm). *Changing Times*. Aug. 1975, pp. 36-38.

## **MOTION PICTURE**

*The Food Revolution* (Motion Picture). New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968, 17 min., sd., col., 16mm.

## **VIDEO TAPE or VIDEOCASSETTE**

Wolfe, Pamela. "Pam Wolfe Bakes Bread" (Videorecording). Presented at Greenwich High School, 1977, cassette, 30 min., b & w, 3/4 in.



**ONE VOLUME of a work in SEVERAL VOLUMES**

Sullivan, Mark. *Over Here: 1914–1918*. Vol. V of *Our Times*. New York: Scribner, 1972.

**Work in a COLLECTION by DIFFERENT AUTHORS**

Lisca, Peter. "The Grapes of Wrath" In *Steinbeck: a Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Robert Murray Davis. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972.

**Work in a COLLECTION by the SAME AUTHOR**

Williams, Tennessee. "Summer and Smoke." In *Four Plays*. New York: New American Library, 1976.

**GOVERNMENT PUBLICATION**

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. *Yearbook of Agriculture*, 1974: *Shopper's Guide*. 93rd Cong., 2nd sess. H. Doc. 93-279. Washington, D.C.:GPO, 1975.

**PAMPHLET**

Chronicle Guidance Publications, Inc. *Cartoonists: Occupational Brief*. 4th ed. D.O.T. 141. Moravia, N.Y.:CGP, 1978.

**Article in an ENCYCLOPEDIA-SIGNED**

Birtler, Erica. "Cells." *The New Book of Popular Science*. (1979).

**Article in a PERIODICAL-WEEKLV**

Stone, Martin. "Energy Jigsaw Puzzle." *U.S. News*, 27 Aug. 1979, p. 76.

**Article in a PERIODICAL-MONTHLV**

Bugialli, George. "Share a Rustic Italian Christmas Eve." *House and Garden*, Dec. 1978, pp. 140-143.

**Article in a WEEKLV PERIODICAL with volume and number given**

"AFL-CIO Looks at Economy." *Facts on File*, 40, No 1051, 29 Feb. 1980, p. 146.

**Article in a NEWSPAPER**

Brody, Jane E. "Nutritional Standards for the 80's." *New York Times*, City Ed., 19 March 1980, Sec. C, p.1, cols. 5-6.

**If an article is unsigned, start citation with title, “Nutritional Standards...”**

**Telephone INTERVIEW**

Brown, Fredrick. Telephone interview. 2 June 1994.

**Personal INTERVIEW**

Conforti, Dan. Personal interview at Esperanza High School. 5 May 1994.

## Debate Ballot

.....

Pre Debate \_\_\_\_\_ Post Debate \_\_\_\_\_ (check the appropriate box)

Circle the appropriate position:

**Pro**

**Con**

**Undecided**

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## Debate Ballot

.....

Pre Debate \_\_\_\_\_ Post Debate \_\_\_\_\_ (check the appropriate box)

Circle the appropriate position:

**Pro**

**Con**

**Undecided**

---

## Debate Ballot

.....

Pre Debate \_\_\_\_\_ Post Debate \_\_\_\_\_ (check the appropriate box)

Circle the appropriate position:

**Pro**

**Con**

**Undecided**

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## Debate Ballot

.....

Pre Debate \_\_\_\_\_ Post Debate \_\_\_\_\_ (check the appropriate box)

Circle the appropriate position:

**Pro**

**Con**

**Undecided**

# Debate Note Sheet

Debate

Topic \_\_\_\_\_

Debate Teams

Pro

Con

1) \_\_\_\_\_

1) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

2) \_\_\_\_\_

Notes

**PRO**

**CON**

--	--

Use Back of Page if Necessary

# Debate Sign-Up Sheet.....

#	Date	Topic	Pro Members	Con Members



# Debate Sign-Up Sheet.....

#	Date	Topic	Pro Members	Con Members

# Debate Topics

.....

Whose view of Absolutism was correct: John Locke's or Thomas Hobbes's?

Which monarch best represents the spirit of the Enlightenment: Catherine the Great or Frederick the Great?

The essential cause of the French Revolution was a collision between a powerful, rising bourgeoisie and an aristocracy defending its privileges.

The decline of English industrial might in relation to that of the U.S. (1820-1913) parallels the relationship between the U.S. and post-World War II Japan.

Cavour's policies of unification were more humanitarian than Bismarck's.

Spanish imperial policies created a class structure that still causes instability in Latin America.

Bismarck's unification of Germany destroyed the European balance of power, leading to World War I.

The Versailles Conference was correct in laying the blame for World War I completely on the shoulders of Germany.

Lack of democratic traditions led to the rise of the totalitarian state in Italy, Germany, and Spain in the years between the World Wars.

World War II could have been avoided had Wilson's "14 Points" been accepted in their entirety.

Should Palestinians be allowed to return to Jerusalem?

African tribal rivalry limits the possibilities of democracy in Central Africa.

Chinese ethnocentricity led to domination by the Europeans.

Should the European nations relinquish their sovereignty to a United Europe?

Mexico's one party government will lead to a revolution in the 21st century.

The policies of Ronald Reagan led to the fall of the Soviet Union.

British mercantile policies made India a greater asset than the American colonies.

Mohammed was one of the greatest military strategists of all time.

Portuguese colonial policies led to the emergence of Brazil as the most advanced country in South America.

Eisenhower's refusal to aid the French at Dien Bien Phu led to the American debacle in Vietnam.

The Athenians rather than the Romans had the greatest impact on American democracy.

Christianity was the main cause of the fall of the Roman Empire.

The Borgias best typify the enlightened despot of Machiavelli.

Was the Reformation a political or religious movement?

Lenin was not a Marxist.

The Catholic Church hindered the advancement of science in the Middle Ages.

Hammurabi's code is the basis of modern western law.

Napoleon should have been executed rather than exiled after his first defeat.

Should Great Britain abandon the monarchy?

The United States was primarily responsible for the Cold War.

# DAC EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING

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DAC Educational Publications was formed in 1988 by two classroom teachers to assist instructors with the presentation of high-quality lesson plans and course outlines. As experienced teachers, we know the problems instructors encounter attempting to keep pace with the latest trends in education. DAC publications are designed to assist you with this problem. All DAC authors are classroom teachers. If you encounter any problems with our products, or have any other comments or suggestions, please feel free to call.

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