

Minnesota Debate Project

FIRST STEPS IN TEACHING POLICY DEBATE

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The Minnesota Debate Project is a partnership program involving the professional organization of the Minnesota Debate Teachers Association, the Office of Graduation Standards, and community foundations.

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Minnesota Debate Project Overview

Curriculum and support services for debate teachers with emphasis on implementing Minnesota's Graduation Standards

The Minnesota Debate Project (MDP) is a continuing effort by the Minnesota Debate Teachers Association to expand the role debate plays in Minnesota's schools. We strongly support the development of both co-curricular debate programs and the implementation of debate curriculum. Because debate is ideal for implementing several of Minnesota's High Graduation Standards, a primary focus of this project is to provide standards-related curriculum and support.

Some highlights of the Minnesota Debate Project include:

CURRICULUM

- ❑ Step-by-step lessons for teaching policy or Lincoln-Douglas debate. These lessons can be adapted for middle or high school students in a variety of classes.
- ❑ Suggested tasks and assessment forms for delivering the High Standards in Inquiry areas Issue Analysis and Research Process and Middle Level Inquiry Standard Accessing Information.
- ❑ Handouts for students that are ready to photo-copy.
- ❑ Supplemental topic-specific articles.

Recognizing the need for flexibility and teacher choice, the debate curriculum package breaks learning debate into nine steps. Each step is thoroughly explained so that a new debate teacher can easily use the lesson. For each step the package provides several activities that a teacher can choose from. Some of these activities correspond directly to the graduation standards. If a teacher chooses to implement a standard in their class, he or she simply assigns the tasks which correspond to the standard. Summary pages at the beginning of the package make this process easy. To aid the teacher, handouts for the students and assessment forms (rubrics or checklists) are provided. Each teacher chooses how long the debate unit will be and which, if any, graduation standards to implement. The MDTA supports the teacher with daily mentoring upon request.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The MDTA is proud to offer the following programs and services free of charge to those interested in curricular and co-curricular debate.

☐ **Mentorship**

The MDTA recognizes that one of the most valuable services we can provide is daily access to an experienced debate teacher or network of teachers. Our organization is committed to providing debate teachers a method for having their questions answered in a timely fashion. Our program includes:

- Access to an experienced debate teacher via telephone and e-mail on a daily basis.
- Access to the MDTA web site for curriculum updates and question & answer forums.

☐ **Seminars & Workshops for Teachers**

A variety of workshops for teachers are available beginning with Coaches Workshops in August. The CTAM conference contains several sessions relevant to debate teachers including curriculum sharing. Other seminar opportunities are made available upon request.

☐ **Research Sharing**

Are you or your students having difficulty locating research on a debate topic? Other debate teachers are willing to share. Simply contact the director of the Minnesota Debate Project or your mentor for more details.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The best way to take advantage of the Minnesota Debate Project is to be in frequent communication with the Minnesota Debate Teacher's Association. If you are using MDP resources or are thinking about using them, please direct your questions, requests, and comments to:

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First Steps & MN Graduation Standards

Minnesota's new graduation rule and the High Standards of the Profile of Learning are now a reality. Students who enter the 9th grade in 1998 and beyond must complete 24 of 48 possible High Standards as one Minnesota public high school graduation requirement (Department of Children, Families & Learning, 1998). Debate is ideal for implementing several high standards.

Three performance packages have been prepared to accompany *First Steps in Teaching Policy Debate*. Each package is from learning area five, Inquiry.

- Issue Analysis (High School)
- Research Process (High School)
- Accessing Information (Middle School)

A performance package is a set of assignments which students will complete to show that they have achieved the standard. Teachers will evaluate each task on a scale from 1 to 4. Assessment rubrics have been included in each performance package. Once students have completed all tasks in the performance package, they will be given a final score of 1-4. This will become part of their permanent performance record.

Each performance package is linked to *First Steps in Teaching Policy Debate*. Each task within a performance package corresponds to one of the nine steps to learning policy debate. In other words, as students learn debate, they will complete assignments which demonstrate they have achieved a standard.

Because each teacher's background experience, student profile, administrative support, resources, and class structure and length all vary greatly, *First Steps in Teaching Policy Debate* has been revised to allow for a great deal of flexibility. In terms of graduation standards, each teacher can choose which standards, if any, they will teach through debate. If you plan to teach one of these three standards while you teach policy debate, we recommend that you follow the following steps:

1. Review the supplemental package for the standard you plan to teach. Become familiar with the tasks the students will be asked to complete and how you will assess their performance.
2. Make any necessary adjustments. You should adapt the package to best take advantage of your strengths and to best serve your students.
3. Once you have revised the package as you see fit, submit it to the appropriate person in your district for approval. They will need to verify that your performance package will effectively meet the required standard.
4. Once you have official approval, you are ready to teach the standard. Each task is linked to *First Steps* so the teaching standard should naturally be a part of teaching policy debate.

Once again, please contact Todd Hering with any questions.

FIRST STEPS IN TEACHING POLICY DEBATE

1998-99

**Resolved: That the United States should
substantially change its foreign policy
toward Russia.**

Step One: Introduction to Debate

Learner Goals

1. To evaluate the role debate plays in society
2. To distinguish between structured and unstructured debate
3. To speak comfortably in small group and whole class settings

Background

Why study debate? Step One encourages students to think about the positive role debate plays in decision-making and the role it may play in their lives. Debate involves the clash or competition of ideas and evidence. Students should recognize that through such clashes, ideas are thoroughly explored and improved.

Debate takes many forms. It may be at a community or business meeting, on the editorial pages of the newspaper, in a court of law, on the floor of Congress, or on the school bus. In each case, the debate involves a clash of ideas and information. The structure of such debates, however, vary considerably. The formal court room setting produces a different kind of debate than the informal school bus argument. Students should recognize the advantages and disadvantages of formal structure or rules.

Additionally, because debate requires public speaking, a positive and encouraging class environment is crucial. Students should be encouraged to speak to groups of people. Most students are anxious and fearful of such activities. With practice and positive reinforcement from peers and teachers, such apprehension gives way to confidence.

At the conclusion of step one, students should see debate as a powerful tool for decision making. They should be able to give examples of structured and unstructured debate and should discuss the advantages and disadvantages of structured debate. Finally, students should begin to build the skills necessary for a successful debate experience by speaking to small and large group audiences.

Activities

1. Debate in Society: Brainstorming & Discussion

In large or small groups, students are asked to discuss the following questions and to record their answers.

- List as many types of debate (defined as clashes of ideas) as you can. Where do these debates occur?
- What purpose does debate serve in each case? Does it help arrive at a better decision?
- Is the debate structured or unstructured? How does this effect the decision making process?

Example:

Type of Debate	Function	Structure & Comments
Criminal Trial	To determine whether accused is guilty	The court has formal rules and therefore is structured debate. The rules allow each side to have their ideas and evidence fairly heard.

2. Video Clips

To further illustrate the difference between structured and unstructured debate and to stimulate more discussion, video clips of various debate situations can be shown. Some recommendations:

- Opening Scene from Clint Eastwood's *Hang 'Em High*: The scene depicts a posse which falsely accuses Eastwood's character of murder and cattle theft and unjustly hangs him. The argument over whether or not to do so is limited by an unstructured format and a poor decision is reached.
- Famous court room scene between Jack Nicholson and Tom Cruise from *A Few Good Men* in which Cruise gets Nicholson to admit guilt: The formal rules of the trial allow for a debate that results in a just decision by the court.
- Final court room scene from *My Cousin Vinny* in which Joe Pesci gets his star witness to explain the innocence of his cousin and client: Again, we see a formal debate structure allow the lawyer to successfully refute compelling but invalid evidence from the prosecution.

Step Two: The Structure of Policy Debate

Learner Goals

1. To describe the format of policy debate
2. To employ basic debate terminology
3. To write resolutions of fact, policy, and value

Background

Now that your students have considered the value of debate in general terms, they are ready to learn about the specific format of policy debate. The National Forensic League (NFL) and the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) recognize two forms of co-curricular debate: policy debate and Lincoln-Douglas (value) debate. The two formats differ in focus and structure. Policy debate focuses on issues of policy and involves teams of two debaters on each side. Lincoln-Douglas debate focuses on questions of value and involves individual students on each side. There are other differences in speech time and order, style, and argumentation.

This *Guide* is geared toward policy debate. The MDTA also offers *First Steps to Teaching Lincoln-Douglas Debate*. The MDTA fully supports both activities as highly valuable educational opportunities for students of all walks of life.

Co-curricular debate is centered around a **RESOLUTION**, or a statement which can be reasonably supported or opposed. Resolutions can be of fact, policy, or value. Students can further develop their understanding of different types of resolutions by completing Activity 1. Each year, a national committee selects five policy resolutions. All schools with debate programs then vote to choose one resolution which will be debated the entire year. The policy resolution for the 1997-98 school year is:

Resolved: That the United States should substantially change its foreign policy toward Russia.

Step Three further explores this resolution. First, students should have a clearer understanding of how a policy debate works. Each debate involves two teams and a judge (or judges). The **AFFIRMATIVE** team speaks in favor of the resolution and a significant change in policy. The **NEGATIVE** team speaks against adopting the proposition. In policy debate, there are two people per team and each person delivers a **CONSTRUCTIVE** speech and a **REBUTTAL** speech. Constructive speeches are a maximum of 8 minutes in length and rebuttal speeches have a 5 minute limit. Each constructive speech is followed by 3 minutes of **CROSS-EXAMINATION**. During cross-examination, one team member asks questions to clarify the information presented and to expose weaknesses in the arguments of the opponent.

The competitive debate model is analogous to the American trial format. In our case the affirmative is the prosecution and the negative is the defense. The negative team has

PRESUMPTION, that is, the present system is “innocent” until the affirmative proves that it should be changed. The affirmative, therefore, has the **BURDEN OF PROOF**. Both sides are obligated to clash over the issues.

Order of Speeches:

1 st Affirmative Constructive (1AC)	8 Minutes
cross-examination of 1AC by 2N	3 Minutes
1 st Negative Constructive (1NC)	8 Minutes
cross-examination of 1NC by 1A	3 Minutes
2 nd Affirmative Constructive (2AC)	8 Minutes
cross-examination of 2AC by 1N	3 Minutes
2 nd Negative Constructive (2NC)	8 Minutes
cross-examination of 2NC by 2A	3 Minutes
1 st Negative Rebuttal	5 Minutes
1 st Affirmative Rebuttal	5 Minutes
2 nd Negative Rebuttal	5 Minutes
2 nd Affirmative Rebuttal	5 Minutes

Most debates including NFL and MSHSL sanctioned events allow a team a total of 5 minutes of **PREPARATION TIME** during a debate. Each team may allocate the time as they choose but may not exceed 5 minutes.

This structure affords both teams significant advantages. The affirmative speaks first and last. They are able to prepare their first speech before the debate begins and have the last chance to persuade the judge to adopt the proposition. The negative has 13 minutes of consecutive speech time in the middle of the debate (the 2NC & 1NR). This time is known as the **NEGATIVE BLOCK** and is often difficult for the affirmative to counter.

Once debate students understand the format of the debate, they begin to wonder what one actually does during their speeches. An eight minute block of time can be quite intimidating to a novice (first year) debater. We will explore this question with much greater detail in the steps that follow. For now, it is sufficient for students to know that constructive speeches are for presenting the initial arguments or positions of each team. Rebuttals are for rebuilding those positions in light of the opponents attack. Debaters may not present new positions in rebuttals.

This Step may be frustrating to students because it contains new terminology and concepts. Students can be reminded that an understanding of the ground rules is necessary before beginning any sport or activity. Students will be speaking, researching, and debating quite soon.

Activities

1. Writing Resolutions

In small groups, students are asked to write resolutions of fact, policy, and value. In other words, students should write debatable statements and identify the nature of the statement. This will help students understand the function of a resolution and will help them distinguish between different types of debate.

Examples:

Resolved: That global warming will be a threat to human welfare in the 21st Century. (Fact)

Resolved: That civil and political rights are more important than economic rights. (Value)

Resolved: That the State of Minnesota should fund a new outdoor baseball stadium. (Policy)

Notice that policy debates involve consideration of both facts and values. In this example, a debate may center around the economic impact of a new stadium on the surrounding area (fact) and the value we place on having major league baseball in Minnesota.

Students may share their resolutions with the large group. The class may also discuss which resolutions are most debatable. What makes a resolution good for debate? Some criteria include timeliness, availability of information, and having roughly equal arguments for and against the proposition (not slanted toward affirmative or negative).

2. Demonstration Debate

To help students visualize a debate, teachers may arrange to show a policy debate on video or live with experienced debate students. The MSHSL usually makes video tapes of the State Championship Final Round available for purchase. If students are used to demonstrate, they should be strongly encouraged to minimize their use of jargon and to maintain a very clear, persuasive style.

Caution: New students may be intimidated by a policy debate. Experienced debate students have highly developed argumentation skills and often present complex arguments and evidence at rates much faster than conversational speaking. If you choose to use such a demonstration, you should remind students that they will only compete against students of similar experience levels. And, of course, these experienced debaters were novices themselves a short time ago.

3. Practice Debate

Students will understand the policy debate model much better after actively experiencing the process. A practice debate with topics of interest to the students and shortened speech times can be quite effective.

Here's one format that fits into a 50 minute class period:

Topic Selection & Preparation	15 Minutes
1 st Affirmative Constructive	3 Minutes
cross-examination of 1AC by 2N	1 Minutes
1 st Negative Constructive (1NC)	3 Minutes
cross-examination of 1NC by 1A	1 Minutes
2 nd Affirmative Constructive (2AC)	3 Minutes
cross-examination of 2AC by 1N	1 Minutes
2 nd Negative Constructive (2NC)	3 Minutes
cross-examination of 2NC by 2A	1 Minutes
1 st Negative Rebuttal	2 Minutes
1 st Affirmative Rebuttal	2 Minutes
2 nd Negative Rebuttal	2 Minutes
2 nd Affirmative Rebuttal	2 Minutes

Sample Topics:

- Resolved: That school hours should be changed to 9AM to 4PM
- Resolved: That student lockers should be randomly searched by school officials
- Resolved: That the school should implement a block scheduling format
- Resolved: That professional athletes should have a maximum salary of \$1 Million
- Resolved: That all students should be randomly tested for drug use

The 1AC presents two to five main reasons for adopting the resolution. The negative counters with pointing out the flaws in the affirmative reasoning and by providing some reasons to reject the proposal. Both sides are encouraged to take notes to help them remember their arguments and to keep track of their opponents arguments.

This activity will help students understand the policy debate format by actively engaging them in the process. Students also enjoy the chance to debate topics of interest to them.

Step Three: The Policy Resolution

Learner Goals

1. To define the terms of the 1998-99 policy resolution
2. To begin evaluating U.S. foreign policy toward Russia

Background

Policy debate centers around a single resolution for the entire season. This year, students around the country will debate **Resolved: That the United States should substantially change its foreign policy toward Russia.** A strong understanding of U.S. foreign policy toward Russia is necessary for students to succeed in policy debate this season.

While the resolution is the center of each debate, each affirmative team designs a specific plan for implementing the resolution. In this case, each affirmative is obligated to outline a beneficial foreign policy change. Step Six addresses the affirmative and gives a much more detailed description of how the affirmative selects and writes a case and plan. For now, students should begin to learn generally about the issue of American foreign policy.

First, it is useful to define the terms of the resolution. Since the resolution sets the boundaries for the debate, students should understand exactly what it means or how it may be interpreted. A good place to start is the term *foreign policy*. What is foreign policy? What are the main components of our foreign policy (military, economic, political, environmental, etc.)? The better the students understand the foreign policy realm, the more prepared they will be to research and debate the specifics of U.S. foreign policy toward Russia.

Once the terms of the resolution have been defined and discussed, students are ready to learn about the topic area. Generally, the teacher will provide students with some introductory articles to read. After reading the articles, the class will discuss the topic area and answer some primary questions. Students should consider:

- What is the current U.S. foreign policy toward Russia?
- How do U.S.-Russian relations affect each country and the world?
- What historical events have contributed to the current state of U.S.-Russian relations?
- How can we best describe Russia economically, politically, militarily, and socially?
- What are the leading criticisms of U.S. foreign policy toward Russia?

Learning about the topic is an ongoing process. A basic understanding of the topic area is sufficient for students to move to the next step in learning policy debate. Of course, variables such as the reading level of your students and the amount of time you have available to teach debate will affect the amount of time devoted to this step.

To aid you in your preparation, a packet of articles on the Russia topic is available from the MDTA.

Because debaters must develop a deep understanding of the topic area, they are required to read a great deal of complex information. The teacher should teach reading skills if necessary and carefully monitor students reading for problems. A number of effective reading strategies may be employed such as the SQ3R method. Please consult a reading specialist in your building for more help.

Activities

1. Defining Terms

Students work individually or in groups to define the key terms in the resolution. In their notes or on 4x6 index cards, students should record the source of their definition (Author, Author's Qualification if given, Publication, Date, Page) and should write the definition exactly as it appears. (Note: the process of recording information is dealt with explicitly in Step 4). The class may discuss variations in the definitions they found.

2. Reading & Discussion (using K-W-L method)

Students should divide a notebook page into three columns. At the top of the page, they should write U.S. foreign policy toward Russia. Then, in column one, students should write "K" for "What I Know." In column two students should write "W" for "What I Want to Know." In the third column student should write "L" for "What Have I Learned."

Before doing any reading, students individually or in groups should fill out columns one and two. They should identify what they do know (or think they know) and what they want to find out. The teacher may help prompt students to identify primary questions about the topic.

At this point, students are ready to read. The pre-reading activity prepares students to gather information more effectively. After the assigned readings are completed, students should fill out the third column (what I learned). This activity may be followed up with more readings and/or discussion.

Step Four: Information: Access & Organization

Learner Goals

1. To understand the role of evidence in debate
2. To access available information resources to find topic information
3. To record information according to debate conventions and ethical guidelines

Background

A policy debate consists of a series of arguments about the need for change. As we will further examine in Step Five, one essential component of an argument is support for a claim. Debaters heavily rely on excerpts from articles, reports, and books to support their claims. These excerpts, usually about three to seven sentences in length, are referred to simply as evidence.

A policy debater must be prepared to make a variety of arguments. Because it is highly desirable to have evidence to support these arguments, a well prepared debater has a wide variety of carefully prepared and organized evidence. This preparation and organization takes substantial time and effort.

Procedure for Accumulating Evidence

1. An article, book, or report on the topic of interest is obtained
2. The document is carefully read. Passages that contain useful evidence are marked.
3. The marked passages are cut out of the article and placed on evidence cards or 8.5 x 11 paper
4. A full source citation and a tag (headline) is written for each excerpt.
5. The evidence is sorted by topic and placed in a filing system easily accessed during a debate

The process takes time, work, and diligence. Most students are not used to such careful reading. Additionally, the evidence gathering process has many opportunities for costly mistakes. For example, if a student misunderstands an article s/he may accidentally take an excerpt out of context. For these reasons, the process requires patience, practice, and teacher supervision. With this approach, students will quickly improve their reading and analytical skills.

A closer look at each step reveals the skills and knowledge necessary for student to become accomplished information processors.

1. Research [An article, book, or report on the topic of interest is obtained]

The research process is an essential part of debate preparation. Students need to be able to access high quality information on a variety of specific issues. Debaters often follow a

progression as they learn to research, beginning with popular magazines and newspapers and moving to academic journals, government documents, and books and reports. Specific skills and knowledge required includes:

- Knowing what information resources are available
- Knowing how to search available information for specific topics
- Knowing how to obtain, review, and if necessary, copy the information

Because information technology is rapidly emerging, research is a quickly changing skill. Students should understand how to access both traditional paper resources and electronically retrievable information. The Internet is now a primary research tool for most students. However, students should also know how to search other computer databases and indexes.

It is recommended that students develop a research plan (see activity 1) to aid them in the process. A plan includes their research goal, a description of the methods they will use, and a progress report for each method after it has been attempted. This allows the teacher to assess student work and allows students to understand where their problem occurs and to identify ways to improve the process.

2. Marking Useful Passages

As a student reads an article that s/he has obtained, passages that make good evidence should be marked. One good way to mark passages is by putting brackets around the sentences that will be cut out and placed on index cards or briefs. Highlighting is problematic because it may be difficult to copy.

Students will immediately struggle with a major question: what should be marked and cut? In other words, what makes a passage or excerpt good evidence. Although it is difficult to say exactly what will be useful in a debate, good evidence fits the following criteria:

1. The excerpt says something that may be useful in a debate. That is, it supports an argument that a debater is likely to make.
2. The excerpt is authoritative. It is from an expert, cites a credible study, or gives strong reasoning to support the argument. It should also be free from excessive bias.
3. The excerpt is concise. Because the evidence is read verbatim during the debate, an ideal passage communicates the idea with a minimum of words.
4. The excerpt is taken in the context of the article. An excerpt should never alter the meaning the author intends. Any qualifiers should be included. Additionally, statements the author goes on to disagree with should not be represented as the author's view.

Following this criteria takes careful student work and teacher supervision. Group activities which walk through the process will be helpful.

3. Cut & Paste

At one time, debate evidence was written out by hand or manually typed on cards. Today, students find it most efficient to cut and past from copies or computer printouts. Some even copy text directly from electronic sources into word processing programs. Regardless of the

method, the idea remains the same, to transfer information from an article to a self-contained card or brief that can be filed. In a way, the article is “harvested.” The useful parts are identified, picked, and stored. The useless parts are disregarded. When students cut and paste, they should be conscious of future copying. The text should be dark enough to copy and the paper should be firmly glued or taped down.

4. Source Citation & Tag

The excerpt alone is not complete without a source citation and tag. For printed materials a full source citation consists of:

- Author
- Author’s Qualifications
- Publication (name of periodical, book, or report)
- Date of Publication
- Page Number(s)

For electronic sources (like Internet sites), the full citation consists of:

- Author
- Author’s Qualifications
- Publication
- Date of Publication
- Name of Computer Service or Network (i.e. Nexis, SIRs, or www address)
- Date of Access

If any of this information is not available, the student should make a note. For example, NQA is often used to signify No Qualifications Available. If the information is available, the student has an obligation to correctly provide it with each evidence excerpt.

A tag is like a headline for the excerpt. It should summarize the main idea of the passage using powerful language and a minimum of words (ideally five or less). The tag should not exaggerate the quality of the information it represents. The tag serves two main purposes. First, it allows students to know the contents of a particular piece of evidence at a glance. Second, the tag is often written during a debate in a competitor’s notes. It represents the content of the evidence and therefore needs to be accurate and concise (so that it can be easily written).

5. Organization

Much of a debate is spontaneous. As one side makes an argument, the other side thinks quickly of responses and counter-arguments. These responses most often require evidence. A debater must quickly find the necessary evidence in his or her files. Typically, evidence is sorted two ways. First, the student decides whether it is affirmative, negative, or both. That is, does it support a change in policy or does it oppose a particular change. Of course, some evidence may be useful for both sides depending on the specific argument. If possible, the debater should label the evidence aff. for affirmative and neg. for negative.

Secondly, the evidence is sorted by topic. For example, a file system may contain files on NATO, Russia's economy, Boris Yeltsin, nuclear weapons, and organized crime. These files will be alphabetized or otherwise grouped. When a student needs evidence on a topic, he or she will quickly go to the appropriate file and pull out what has been prepared.

Summary

With practice and help students can understand and successfully complete this process amazingly quickly. The process teaches students to read purposefully, summarize the main idea of written excerpt, take responsibility for providing a complete source citation, and for devising and maintaining an effective organization system.

Activities

1. Research Plan & Review

Students need to learn that effective research follows an organized and disciplined plan. Simply going to a library or surfing the Internet is inefficient. The research plan asks students to set goals, identify methods, and evaluate their progress. See the Research Process Performance Package for a research plan outline. The outline asks the students to:

- State their research goal
- List key words, phrases, and authors they will look for
- List a minimum of three methods they will pursue
- After pursuing these methods, the plan asks students to complete a review of their methods.

The teacher should make a specific research assignment to fit his or her needs.

2. Marking Evidence

Each member of the class is given the same article to read and mark. This may be done in class or as homework. After students have had a chance to mark the passages they feel would make good evidence cards, students are asked to read their passages aloud and explain how they might be useful in a debate. The teacher should provide constructive feedback. It is especially important that any passages marked out of context are identified as inappropriate. The class should also review how to write a complete citation for the article.

3. Making & Evaluating Evidence Cards

Students can be assigned an issue or an article to make evidence cards from. If students have done the issue analysis project (creating a background file and presentation) they may use the same issue for their evidence card assignment. See the next page for a complete evidence card assignment and assessment rubric. There is also a checklist for students on the page after the evidence assignment.

Making and Evaluating Evidence Cards

Instructions: Using Step 4 as a guide, you will prepare and evaluate a minimum of ten evidence cards. First, you must select an area of conflict or clash within your issue. This should be a question with two sides (for example, should NATO be expanded further into Eastern Europe?). It is to your advantage to select a question that you can easily research both sides to.

After you have selected a question, your job is to make a minimum of five evidence cards on both the pro and con side of the issue. You must use at least two different sources for each side. When you are finished, you will have a set of evidence cards on your issue from a variety of sources.

Once you have made your evidence cards, they will be evaluated in 2 ways. First, you should evaluate your own work using the Evidence Cards Checklist. Once all your evidence fits the criteria of the checklist, your teacher will evaluate your work on the following criteria:

	Excellent (E)	Satisfactory (S)	Needs Improvement (N)	Teacher Evaluation (E, S, N)
Tag	Generally, your evidence tags are accurate, powerful, concise.	Tags represent the main idea, but need more work on language.	Tags do not clearly represent the main idea of the evidence.	
Citation	Each evidence card has a complete citation according to MDTA rules.	Each citation is complete, but there are a few mechanical errors.	Citations are incomplete or inaccurate.	
Authority	Sources are credible and free from excess bias.	Sources are credible, but may be slightly biased or otherwise questionable.	Sources lack credibility.	
Relevance	Evidence cards are all relevant to the question/topic.	Evidence cards are mostly relevant to the question/topic.	Many evidence cards are not relevant to the question/topic.	
Length	Evidence is about 3-7 sentences (a length easily presented in a debate).	Evidence is slightly too long or too short.	Evidence is unreasonably short or long.	
Context	All evidence cards are cut within the context of the article.		One or more evidence cards are cut out of context.	
Neatness	The evidence cards, including tag & citation is clearly printed in dark ink.	The evidence card is readable, but not easily copied.	The evidence card is difficult to read.	

Student Name: _____

Date Assessed: _____

Overall Evaluation: _____

Teacher Comments:

Evidence Cards Checklist

What makes an excerpt a good piece of evidence?

_____ Relevance: The excerpt says something that may be useful in a debate. That is, it supports an argument that a you may make.

_____ Authoritative: It is from an expert, cites a credible study, or gives strong reasoning or data to support the argument. It should also be free from excessive bias.

_____ Presentability: Is the excerpt short enough so that it can be read in a debate? Because the evidence is read verbatim during the debate, an ideal passage communicates the idea with a minimum of words (usually 3 to 7 sentences).

_____ In Context: An excerpt should never alter the meaning the author intends. Any qualifiers should be included. Additionally, statements the author goes on to disagree with should not be represented as the author's view.

What is included in a full source citation?

For Printed Sources, the full citation consists of

- _____ Author
- _____ Author's Qualifications
- _____ Publication (name of periodical, book, or report)
- _____ Date of Publication
- _____ Page Number(s)

For electronic sources (like Internet sites), the full citation consists of:

- _____ Author
- _____ Author's Qualifications
- _____ Publication (name of periodical, book, or report)
- _____ Date of Publication
- _____ Name of Computer Service or Network (e.g. Nexis, SIRs, or www address)
- _____ Date of Access

What makes a good tag (headline) for a piece of evidence?

- _____ Summarizes the main idea of the excerpt accurately
- _____ Uses powerful and descriptive language
- _____ Is six words or less

Step Five: Presenting an Argument

Learner Goals

1. To correctly deliver a debate argument
2. To speak and read aloud in a clear and persuasive voice

Background

A debate is a series of arguments. While these arguments differ in function, structure, and importance, the basic format for delivery remains the same. Students should practice delivery throughout their debate experience. To begin with, mastering the basic delivery of an argument will help build student confidence and will open the door to a wide range of activities.

Basic Argument Format

1. **Sign-posting:** A signpost is a verbal map that allow the listener to know where to place the argument in the context of the debate. Is the argument about whether or not the plan works or is it about the need for change? Debaters should always introduce their arguments with a simple signpost. Example: “Please turn to Harms (an issue we’ll fully define in step #6). I have three responses.” This tells everyone listening which issue the argument pertains to. This is essential for the debate to remain organized.
2. **Claim:** The statement of the argument. The claim, much like an evidence tag should be brief and powerfully stated. Example: “NATO expansion will cause war.” This tells the listener what the argument is. A claim by itself, however, is only an assertion. To become an argument, it requires support.
3. **Support.** The two most common forms of support for an argument are reasoning and evidence. For many arguments, logical reasoning is sufficient to win the point. The debater may also refer to previously presented evidence as support. At times, new evidence is required.

While sign-posting and stating claims requires practice, supporting claims requires the most preparation and work. The type of support given to an argument will depend on its importance in the debate and the arguments and evidence presented up to that point. Many arguments are made without the presentation of new evidence. Some examples:

- “Global Warming is scientifically doubtful [claim]. The global warming theory is suspect for several reasons. First, despite predictions of scientists, we have seen no significant temperature increases. Second, the computer models used to predict climate change are faulty. And third, a growing number of qualified experts tell us that the theory is untrue.” [support—the debater gives reasons for the listener to support the claim]

- “Global Warming is scientifically doubtful [claim]. The negative team has provided evidence from three leading scientists that casts doubt on the global warming theory. This evidence has not been refuted. Therefore, we should consider the theory doubtful at best.” [support—the debaters refers to previous evidence and the lack of refutation to support the claim]

In step four, students prepared evidence cards. Now it is time to use that evidence to support an argument.

Activities

1. Delivering an Argument with Evidence

Using the evidence prepared in Step Four, students will present a complete argument in front of small groups or their class. The teacher should ensure that the argument is delivered properly—bad habits are difficult to break. Please see the attached rubric for an assessment option.

2. Supporting Claims

One activity that students usually enjoy is the chance to support some “fun” claims. The teacher presents the class with a claim. A student volunteer (or one selected by the student) will provide the support. The claims should be topics of interest to the students and somewhat controversial. Some examples:

- Seinfeld is the best comedy on television
- Tom Cruise is a better actor than Mel Gibson, Tom Hanks, and Brad Pitt
- Professional athletes are overpaid
- Professional athletes deserve multi-million dollar salaries

This activity helps students recognize that an argument requires support. They should be able to clearly distinguish between an argument and an assertion.

Step Six: Building the Affirmative Case

Learner Goals

1. To understand the components of an affirmative case
2. To understand the concept of topicality

Background

The affirmative team speaks in favor of the resolution and therefore in favor of change. As you know, this year's resolution is **Resolved: That the United States should substantially change its foreign policy toward Russia**. As you and your students think about whether the resolution should be adopted, you are likely to say, "it depends on the policy." Right! The affirmative has the obligation to present a specific **PLAN** which fits within the boundaries set by the resolution. In this case, the plan must be a change in United States foreign policy toward Russia.

The plan is one part of the affirmative's job. They also must present a **CASE** for change. The case provides the justification for adopting the plan. A complete case contains three **STOCK ISSUES**. Stock issues are the core components of the affirmative justification for change.

The affirmative begins by proving that a significant problem exists. First, the affirmative must show a **HARM**—the damage the problem causes. Common harms are illness, economic problems like unemployment and inflation, reduced security, international conflict, and discrimination. Additionally, the affirmative must show the **SIGNIFICANCE** of the problem. The question, "How large is the problem?", needs to be answered. The affirmative can argue the significance of the problem both quantitatively and qualitatively. Many choose to combine the issues of significance and harms into one main argument which establishes that a major problem exists.

In addition to establishing the problem, the affirmative has an obligation to show that our current policy is inadequate. Since the affirmative always argues for a policy change, they have an obligation to show that the problem is rooted in poor policy. This is the stock issue of **INHERENCY**. The problem is inherent or imbedded within the status quo. Inherency answers the question, "Why, absent the resolution, will the problem continue?" It identifies barriers to solving the harms which are inherent to the status quo.

Finally, after the plan has been presented, the affirmative has an obligation to show it will work to reduce the problem. This is the issue of **SOLVENCY**. Solvency shows that the new policy will work better than the current one.

With these components in mind, the affirmative case contains the following major arguments:

1. There is a significant problem (SIGNIFICANCE & HARMS)
2. Current policies will not adequately address the problem (INHERENCY)
3. There is a better policy that we can adopt (PLAN)
4. The new policy will work to reduce or eliminate the problem (SOLVENCY)

This is essence of the affirmative case. Students should now be ready to construct an affirmative case. The first step is to pick a plan. Based on their knowledge of the topic and help from the teacher, students should pick a policy that they find most desirable. After all, they will have to defend it.

In Minnesota, the MDTA establishes **NOVICE CASE LIMITS**. These limits identify case areas which novice debaters are allowed to pursue on the affirmative side in competition. This eases the research burdens and allows students to focus their efforts. The MDTA novice case limits for 1998-99 are as follows:

1. financial aid to strengthen Russia's economy
2. limit or halt NATO expansion
3. control Russian nuclear sales and/or stockpiles
4. promotion of political reform in Russia

You will want to choose one of these areas as your first case. As a class, you should read about the area, devise a plan, and then find evidence to support each of the stock issues. The first affirmative constructive is prepared in script form. Your students should see how this step is a culmination of many of the skills they have been practicing. It requires an understanding of the issue, evidence, argument construction, and affirmative case theory.

On a final note, the affirmative has an obligation to choose a plan which is within the boundaries set by the resolution. Since the resolution establishes common ground by defining what both sides debate, it is essential that the plan be within the limits of the resolution. What if the affirmative came to the debate and argued that we should build the Twins an outdoor stadium? The other team would say that this is unfair because they were prepared to debate United States foreign policy toward Russia. This is the concept of **TOPICALITY**. The affirmative must be topical (within the topic limit). If they are not, they are considered non-topical and should lose the debate. This is an argument that the negative team can make (see Step Seven).

Activities

1. Stock Issues work sheet

To better understand the difference between the stock issues, students can complete a simple worksheet (attached) which asks that arguments be identified as one of the four stock issues.

2. Plan Writing Activity

It is one thing to identify a problem. It is another to identify its solution. A problem-solution activity will help students think as problem solvers. Choose problems that affect students (lack of sleep, stress, crime) and ask them to devise specific plans for solving the problems. The problem list may be a product of brainstorming.

3. Case Construction

This is a major assignment for students because it requires them to demonstrate many of the skills we have been discussing. You may choose to first write an affirmative case as a class. Using this method, you may give students examples to learn from before they have to write a case on their own. You may also choose to have students write affirmative cases in groups. New debate students will probably need a lot of time and help to complete such a project. Either way, the case construction will follow this general order:

- Choose the case area you want to pursue
- Read about the case area and cut evidence cards that relate
- Agree on a case thesis (guiding idea)
- Agree on main case components (stock issues and plan)
- Find evidence for stock issues and write your plan
- Word process the case in script form, read, discuss, and revise

Stock Issues Identification

Directions: By each of the following statements, decide which stock issue the statement would best support. Use the following abbreviations: H=Harms, Sig=Significance, I=Inherency, and S=Solvency.

- _____ NATO expansion will cause war.
- _____ Economic assistance will save Russia's economy.
- _____ Current U.S. policy encourages NATO expansion.
- _____ 50 million Russians are malnourished.
- _____ START III will reduce the threat of nuclear war.
- _____ Dependence on Yeltsin threatens national security.
- _____ Nuclear proliferation risks terrorism and death.
- _____ Lobbyists for American business oppose free trade with Russia.
- _____ Increasing technological assistance will improve Russian health.
- _____ Russian nuclear reactors produce radiation.
- _____ Alcoholism will increase 25% in Russia by 2010.
- _____ Clinton is unwilling to politically distance himself from Yeltsin.
- _____ An arms treaty would reduce the risk of a conventional war.
- _____ The U.S. is losing its dominance in international affairs.
- _____ The Russian government fails to fight corruption.

Step Seven: Developing the Negative

Learner Goals

1. To demonstrate refutation techniques
2. To understand disadvantages and workability arguments

Background

After learning how to build the arguments for change, students should consider how to prepare for the other side, the negative. The negative's job is to refute or prove untrue what the affirmative has argued. The negative may (and usually does) agree with portions of the affirmative case. Overall, however, the negative argues that the affirmative plan should not be adopted.

The negative team can make several different types of arguments. First, they may refute the stock issues:

- The problem does not really exist (no harm)
- The problem exists, but is insignificant (no significance)
- The status quo has a better approach to solving the problem (no inherency)
- The affirmative has not proven that their plan will solve the problem (no solvency)

The negative also has some special arguments at their disposal. The above arguments are considered **CASE ATTACKS** because they refute the arguments the affirmative uses to build their case for change. The negative may also use **PLAN ATTACKS**. The plan will not work (**WORKABILITY ATTACK**) and the adoption of the plan will cause a **DISADVANTAGE**.

Workability

The **WORKABILITY** argument identifies a flaw in the affirmative plan. The negative uses this argument to show that the benefits the affirmative claims will not be achieved. In other words, the plan will not “meet the benefits” (workability arguments are sometimes referred to as **PMA**s—Plan will not Meet Advantage). For example, let's assume the affirmative plan mandates economic assistance to Russia. The affirmative's solvency may contend that this plan will increase living standards. The negative may challenge the workability of the proposal by arguing that bureaucracy and corruption will divert that aid from its intended sources. (Note: students may choose to apply this argument directly to the solvency issue instead of raising it as a workability argument.)

Workability Format

Title

- A. State what affirmative wants to do
- B. Prove why the plan won't work (with reasoning and evidence)
- C. Impact: explain the effect the workability problem has (how much of a barrier is it)

Disadvantages

The DISADVANTAGE argument shows the negative effect of the plan. In order to be an effective argument, a disadvantage has to be something that would not also happen if the affirmative would not be adopted. In other words, the plan must uniquely cause the problem. Using the economic assistance example, the negative may argue that giving such governmental aid may discourage private investment in Russia, worsening the overall economic situation.

Disadvantage Format

Title & Thesis

(The main idea of the disadvantage should be explained. What harm does the plan cause?)

- A. Uniqueness: The disadvantage will not occur with the status quo—it's unique to the affirmative
- B. Link: The affirmative plan causes something bad to happen
- C. Impact: The extent of the damage is explained

A disadvantage, just like an affirmative case, must be proven.

Topicality

In special cases, the negative may challenge the topicality of the affirmative plan. That is, they may argue that it is not within the boundaries of the resolution and is therefore unfair. A topicality challenge may take the following form.

- A. Define the term or phrase the affirmative fails to meet
- B. Explain how the terms should be interpreted (Standards)
- C. Explain how the plan fails to fall within the boundary (Violation)
- D. Due to this violation, the negative wins the debate (Impact)

Negative Preparation

The novice case limits allow the negatives to focus on specific case areas. Evidence and arguments should be prepared in advance. New arguments can be presented in both the first and second negative constructive speeches. A traditional way to divide responsibilities is to assign case arguments (the stock issues) to the 1NC and plan arguments (disadvantages and workability arguments) to the 2NC.

Activities

1. Case Refutation

Students should choose one argument from the affirmative case that has been developed or an argument that the affirmative is likely to make. Individually or in small groups, two to four counter arguments should be identified. Students may point out flaws in the affirmative argument and may present counter evidence and reasoning. Once the arguments have been planned, students should practice delivering them using the format from Step Five.

2. Writing a Disadvantage or Workability

The teacher should provide a sample plan for students to focus on. Students should first identify what some disadvantages and workability problems with the plan might be. Then, they should pick the one they think will be best. Students should outline the argument using the format provided. The teacher may also require students to find evidence to support the claims within the plan attack.

Step Eight: Skills of Debate Competition

Learner Goals

1. To develop note-taking and listening skills
2. To effectively ask and answer cross-examination questions
3. To understand the responsibilities of rebuttal speeches

With an understanding of the topic, research techniques, argument delivery, and the affirmative and negative, students are nearly ready to begin having full policy debates. The sooner students debate the better. Active participation in a full debate will greatly accelerate the learning process because students see the application of their skills and knowledge and ask questions relevant to improving their performance. First, some other skills of debate competition need to be addressed.

Flowing

Listening and note-taking are important to a successful debate. Without accurate notes, debates are disorganized, ideas and arguments are lost, and the audience is left confused. Debaters make a **FLOW CHART** during each debate. The flow chart, often simply called the flow, are organized notes of the arguments in the debate. The chart tracks the progress of arguments. Judges also flow the debate.

To make a flow chart, students should follow this process:

1. Get an 8.5 x 14 legal pad.
2. Turn the pad sideways (so that it is 14" from left to right)
3. Divide the page into 7 equal columns
4. Label the top of each column with the following speech abbreviations: 1AC, 1NC, 2AC, 2NC/1NR, 1AR, 2NR, 2AR. Notice that 2NR and 1NR share a slot. This is because they are back to back in the debate. The two speakers should work together to divide up the arguments (plan and case) so that there is not overlap. This will keep the flow chart neat and will avoid repetition.

Once the chart is ready, students take notes in an outline format. With space limitations, the use of abbreviation is required. Arguments should be placed in the column of the speech they are delivered in. Arguments in response to earlier arguments should be written directly to the right of the corresponding point. The flow chart then creates a visual picture of the debate. Reading across the flow, students should be able to say, "The original argument was this, then we said, then they said, then we said..." Careful listening and a quick pen are required for accurate flowing.

Cross-Examination

Cross-examination serves three important purposes in the debate. It gives one side the chance to clarify the arguments and evidence presented by the other. Secondly, it is an opportunity to demonstrate flaws in the opponents arguments. Thirdly, cross-examination is the time when the audience and judge have a chance to develop an opinion about the debater's personality. In other words, cross-examination is a chance to gain the judge's favor.

In cross-examination, both participants face the judge rather than each other. This is because the questions are intended for the audience. The keys to effective cross-examination are good questions and a professional demeanor. Specifically:

1. Ask specific questions that get to the heart of the issue.
2. Be polite, professional, and respectful during cross-examination.
3. Never personalize cross-examination—the focus should always be on issues.

Rebuttals

After constructive speeches are over, the main arguments of the debate have been presented. The affirmative justification has been presented (1AC) and extended (2AC). The negative counter-arguments and plan attacks have also been presented. Rebuttals are the time to rebuild key arguments, refute the arguments of your opponent, and focus the debate on key issues. It is the time to convince the judge to vote in your favor.

In order to win an issue, a team must carry it through to the end of the debate. They must also defend it from opponents attacks. A debater should ask herself, why am I right? Possible reasons might be better evidence or clearer reasoning. These reasons should be made clear to the judge. An example of a rebuttal argument:

“Turn to Contention I, Harms. On the A point, that NATO expansion would restart the Cold War, I have two responses. 1. Affirmative claims are empirically disproven ...as we have shown, affirmative evidence is based on older sources. Since these reports were published, Russia's political and economic transitions have continued. The affirmative team did not respond to this argument. Their evidence, therefore, should not be considered valid. 2. Russia's military weak...In this debate, we have disputed the affirmative claim that Russia's military is a threat. Let's remember the evidence which indicated that their conventional forces were very underfunded and demoralized. Since the status quo has a powerful nuclear deterrent, there is no reason to fear Russian military activity in Europe. In short, there will be no return to the Cold War”

This speaker follows the argument format by sign-posting, clearly stating their claims, and providing support for each claim. They attempt to capture the issue by extending the arguments that clarify the issue in their favor.

The 1NR (1st Negative Rebuttal) shares responsibility with the 2NC and therefore does not need to deal with every issue in the debate. For example, 1NR may focus exclusively on the stock issues. For the other three rebuttals, however, they must deal with all the issues in the debate. If

any issue is ignored or “dropped,” the other team can easily win it. Debaters may need to deal with multiple issues in rebuttals. This means that in 1AR, 2NR, and 2AR, debaters need to 1) focus on key issues—there is no time for irrelevant arguments, and 2) economize their use of language. The debater should speak in clear, persuasive, and concise sentences.

In the last two rebuttals, persuasion and comparison are especially important. These speeches serve as closing arguments. Each speaker should try to “write the ballot” for the judge. In other words, the speaker should explain clearly why they win the debate. This requires comparison between issues and a “big picture” view of the debate.

Activities

1. Practice Flowing

Have one student read a complete affirmative case aloud to the class. Each student should set up their flow chart as diagrammed. As the speaker delivers the speech, each student should take a flow. See the attached assessment rubric.

2. Practice Cross-Examination

One student should present an argument to class (or a smaller group). Another student should then be chosen as a questioner. The teacher should supervise cross-examination and offer suggestions.

3. Single Issue Debate

To practice the skills of argument delivery, refutation, and extension, debaters may focus on a single issue. For example, the question may be “Is the return to communism in Russia a threat?” The affirmative will develop the potential for Russia’s government to again become communist. The negative will counter with opposing argumentation and evidence. The debate will extend into rebuttals. Who can convincingly win the issue?

Step Nine: Performance

Learner Goals

1. To complete a policy debate
2. To conduct a performance review

Background

Like any performance based activity, the best way to understand debate is to do it. A baseball player improves his swing by practicing hitting and getting coaching advice. Likewise, a debater improves by debating. Through the first eight steps, students have been exposed to the foundations of policy debate. For them, much will remain confusing and frustrating until they get a chance to perform, ask questions and to perform again. Patience and perseverance are crucial during the first few weeks of debate.

A helpful tool introduced in this step is the performance review. Each student should complete a review after their debates. The review asks students to think critically about what happened during the debate. It also requires them to set goals for improvement.

Activities

1. Full Debates

Now is the time for students to put everything they learned together in a full debate. The teacher may adjust time limits to fit their classroom needs. One approach is to allow for 6 minute constructive, 2 minutes of cross examination, and 3 minute rebuttals (a total of 44 minutes). Attached you will find a ballot that serves as an excellent performance assessment tool. Students will need a lot of support as they debate for the first few times. You will be amazed how quickly they develop the skills of debate.

2. Practice Speech

After a full debate, it is useful to give one speech from the debate over again (this may even be several days after the debate). This gives the debater a chance to work on clearer argumentation and language.

Performance Review

Name: _____

Performance Date & Place: _____

Circle your speaker position: 1A 1N 2A 2N

A. Rate your performance in the following skills areas using the scale:

E=excellent, S=satisfactory, N=Needs improvement

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| 1. Effective Communication | _____ | 4. Critical Analysis | _____ |
| 2. Coherent Organization | _____ | 5. Argumentation | _____ |
| 3. Application of Evidence | _____ | 6. Cross-Examination | _____ |

B. Successes: What areas of your performance did you feel good about?

C. Areas for Improvement: What areas of your performance need the most work?

D. Set one major goal for your next debate:

E. Questions: On the back of this sheet, make two columns. Label the first column TOPIC and the second column DEBATE SKILLS. Write at least three questions in each column that came up during the debate.