

Mini Debate Lesson Plan

Mini debates provide short, enjoyable opportunities for students to work with topics that are both familiar and challenging. Mini debates allow the focus to be on the presentation and communication skills rather than the research.

Mini Debate Format

1. Side A presents arguments in favor of the topic.
2. Side B presents arguments against the topic.
3. Side A responds to information presented by Side B.
4. Side B responds to information presented by Side A.

Mini Debate Customizations

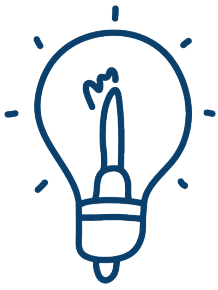
- **Preparation**
 - Assign pairs and groups of three to allow for team collaboration and support.
 - Preparation time may vary from a few minutes to several days.
 - This should include any research and practice necessary to support their stance during the debate.
 - Each team member should contribute to the debate.
 - The roles may consist of a researcher, timekeeper, or the team spokesperson.
 - Students are encouraged to rotate as the team spokesperson.
- **Debate**
 - Vary the length of presentation time per topic.
 - Select a timekeeper for each side.
 - Invite questions from the audience.
 - Invite another teacher or chaperone to listen in on debates and help determine the winner.
 - Involve student audience in determining the winner.
- **Post-Debate**
 - The winning side should be determined by argument support—not opinion.
 - As an extension activity, after the debate, ask students to argue the opposing viewpoint of one of their topics.
 - Encourage your students to reflect on their and others' performances, and provide 'glows' and 'grows' for themselves and others.

Debate Rules

- Respond to the argument objectively.
- Listen and respond respectfully.
- Do not interrupt. Each team will have ample time to support their stance.



Check out envisionexperience.com/Inauguration for more resources



During the preparation and execution of the students' topic for debate, students should remember to objectively reflect on their debate stance rather than their personal opinion.



Have students think about their topics and begin conducting research on their selected stance. Students should collectively work to organize and plan their delivery.

When preparing their arguments, students should identify the potential counterarguments and prepare to rebut all points.

Sample Topics

These can be used in conjunction with the *How Elections Impact Our Democratic Republic* student handout.

1. How do elections impact our democratic republic?
2. What influence, if any, does money have in elections?
3. Are voter I.D. laws unconstitutional? Why or why not?
4. Why would you want to contact your elected officials? How would you?
5. Why is your vote important?
6. Do political parties serve the public interest and further the cause of democracy?

Debate Rubric

- Use the Mini Debate Rubric to assess students' performance in the debate.
- Complete one rubric per student.
- The "Expected" column should be used to assess students, while the "Opportunities for Improvement" column offers suggestions of feedback you can provide for growth in each area, based on a student's performance. Feedback should be customized per student.
- Your rubric should be provided to students prior to the debate to help with their preparation.

Mini Debate Rubric

Student Name:

	EXPECTED	OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT
Delivery	<input type="checkbox"/> Voice is clear <input type="checkbox"/> Volume is appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary is purposeful	
Content	<input type="checkbox"/> Information is accurate and appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of paying attention during the program <input type="checkbox"/> Content matches the topic in a central way	
Response	<input type="checkbox"/> Response is respectful and specific to new points brought up by the other side <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of active listening to others' arguments <input type="checkbox"/> Response expands the topic and/or reinforces original position	
Reasoning	<input type="checkbox"/> Audience can easily follow the line of reasoning <input type="checkbox"/> Information/arguments/claims are appropriate to the task and topic <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence exists of thinking about how topic can affect the bigger picture	

Feedback Suggestions

	OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT
Delivery	<p>Projection and enunciation would help others to understand the point you are making.</p> <p>Word choice can make a difference—being specific helps and using more formal language can convey that you should be taken seriously.</p>
Content	<p>Arguments are more convincing when facts are included; details and evidence would better support your ideas on the topic.</p>
Response	<p>Keep a respectful tone—even if and especially when you disagree.</p> <p>Responding directly to points the other side raises demonstrates your own ability to listen.</p>
Reasoning	<p>The debate is stronger when arguments are clearly tied to an idea and organized in a tight, logical fashion.</p> <p>Thinking too far outside the box can distract from the central idea of the debate.</p>

Mini Debate Rubric

Student Name: _____

	EXPECTED	OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT
Delivery	<p>Voice is clear</p> <p>Volume is appropriate</p> <p>Vocabulary is purposeful</p>	
Content	<p>Information is accurate and appropriate</p> <p>Evidence of paying attention during the program</p> <p>Content matches the topic in a central way</p>	
Response	<p>Response is respectful and specific to new points brought up by the other side</p> <p>Evidence of active listening to others' arguments</p> <p>Response expands the topic and/or reinforces original position</p>	
Reasoning	<p>Audience can easily follow the line of reasoning</p> <p>Information/arguments/claims are appropriate to the task and topic</p> <p>Evidence exists of thinking about how topic can affect the bigger picture</p>	