

**CONCERN
PRIMARY
DEBATES**



CONCERN
worldwide



CONCERN PRIMARY DEBATES HANDBOOK



Welcome

Dear Teacher,

If you are interested in taking part in the Concern Primary Debates, then this guide is for you!

Concern Worldwide has been coordinating the Primary Debates since 2015 in conjunction with Education Support Centres across Ireland in order to engage young people in a meaningful way with some of the complex issues we work with.

Debating is a fun, educational way of encouraging your students to really engage with complex issues. Learning to debate teaches students how to apply critical analysis and how to prepare an argument using facts and sound research. It also teaches students valuable communication skills, such as how to deliver a speech and how to effectively defend the points they make.

Debating can take many forms. If you are are interested in entering a team in competitive debating, this handbook will offer guidance on how formal debating works and the rules of the Concern Primary Debates.



Debating is a useful teaching methodology. The higher order skills learned can be applied across a range of areas. The topics covered link with SESE in particular.

Debating is an ideal whole class activity. We would encourage teachers to get whole classes involved to make participation as meaningful as possible.

Debating exercises in this handbook can be used for group or whole class activities.

For more information, check the Concern Primary Debates website here: <https://www.concern.net/schools-and-youth/debates/primary-school>.

Where we work



www.concern.net/where-we-work

Our impact in 2021

17.8m
people reached
through our
emergency response

11.4m
people reached
through our health
interventions

5.2m
people reached
through our livelihood
programmes

About Concern Primary Debates



How do I register my school?

You can register by contacting your local Education Support Centre who look after the local debates on behalf of Concern. You can find details of participating centres on the Concern website here: <https://www.concern.net/schools-and-youth/debates/primary-school>. Your local centre will be your point of contact during the competition and organise fixtures, debates etc.

Concern are always on hand to take your queries at debates@concern.net

What classes can enter the Concern Primary Debates?

The Concern Primary Debates is most suitable for senior primary students (5th- 6th class). However students from 3rd to 4th class are often involved, particularly in smaller schools.

How many teams can I enter?

Concern advises that each school enters one team per school, but it is up to each Education Centre to decide.

How many students can be on a team?

It is recommended you have a panel of 6 debaters. However only 3 students can speak at each debate. Teachers are free to rotate speakers, researchers and other roles for different debates.

Concern recommends introducing debates preparation as a whole class activity as there are many benefits to having the whole class involved taking on various roles such as researchers, timekeepers, chairpeople etc.

Where do the debates take place?

Your local education centre will advise you of your fixtures and the method to use.

There is teacher training for every centre before the competition starts and its recommended teachers attend this training. Currently Regional debates take place online on a platform like Zoom or are recorded for our adjudicators.

Who acts as a chairperson and timekeeper?

We recommend that the proposing school provides the chairperson. For online debates each school should have their own timekeeper. You will find instructions for both at the back of the handbook. Concern advises that students take these roles.

Who organises adjudicators to mark the debates?

Your local centre will advise if they are organising adjudicators or if your school needs to provide an adjudicator. If your school is providing an adjudicator, Concern will provide you with a list of vetted and approved adjudicators to contact in advance of your debates.

What kind of motions will we be debating?

Concern provides motions to the education centres. All the motions are based on development issues related to Concern's work or the lives of young people. Concern has a variety of resources available online that may help you prepare.

How many debates will my school have?

Each centre has their own unique structure and will advise you.

Why Teach Debating?

Debating teaches us how to put together a structured researched argument or point of view which we are should be able to defend. It also teaches us to listen to opposing views and to critically evaluate information.

Using Debates in your classroom

What is a debate?

A formal argument where groups or individuals present opposing views about particular issue according to a set of rules.

Using debating in the classroom can help enable a child in 5th or 6th class to meet the following learning outcomes as outlined by the Department of Education and Skills:

- discuss issues of major concern.
- use a discussion of the familiar as the basis of a more formal or objective grasp of a topic or concept.
- listen to a presentation on a particular topic, decide through discussion which are the most appropriate questions to ask, and then prioritise them.
- argue points of view from the perspective of agreement and disagreement through informal discussion and in the context of formal debates.
- justify and defend particular opinions or attitudes and try to persuade others to support a particular point of view.
- respond to arguments presented by the teacher.
- discuss the value, truth or relevance of popular ideas, causes and proverbs.

Let's debate it!

Curriculum links include

- English (oral language development)
- SESE subjects (analytical thinking, research that includes fact finding and using sources)
- Maths (research including data and statistics).



Researching Debates

Researching a debating motion provides a great opportunity for whole class involvement.

We recommend when you receive the motion that you look at it from both the proposing and opposing sides.

This will help your team:

1. Predict arguments the other team may have and have ideas for potential refutation and rebuttals
2. Develop their knowledge of the topic as a whole and find possible new viewpoints to strengthen their argument

There are 5 marks awarded for use of sources. Students should provide at least 3-5 pieces of information and elaborate on where they sourced this material from.

“According to the Irish Times.....”

“We surveyed all of fifth class in our school and the results demonstrate....”

“As noted by Concern Worldwide.....”

Sources

This is a good opportunity to develop skills in understanding different sources of information. It links to the History curriculum but also to English and Literacy.

Some questions you might ask the class to think about:

- Where can we go to look for information?
- What is the difference between a primary source and a secondary source?
- How do we know how trustworthy/reliable our source is?



This also presents a good opportunity to discuss how we use the Internet as a source of information. How do we know if something is factual vs ‘Fake News’?

Can we tell who has posted the information? How can we tell if it is accurate? How to tell if the website we are looking at is an official website or not? Encourage students to look at web addresses.

Apart from the internet, what other places can we look for information? Is the author of the information from the time or are they writing after the fact? Were they there and is it a first-hand account or do we know if they are a reliable witness?

Useful websites

www.concern.net

www.scoilnet.ie

www.kidfriendlysearch.com

www.funbrain.com

www.factmonster.com

www.kids.nationalgeographic.com

www.worldalmanacforkids.com



Refutation and rebuttal

This is a core component of debating. In essence, this is what differentiates debating from public speaking. Refutation and rebuttal are the methods of counter arguing. To refute an argument is to produce evidence (facts or figures) to prove it untrue. To rebut an argument is to discredit it by offering a completely different point of view.

Both methods are accepted in the Concern Primary Debates.



Please note that there are 5 marks awarded for Refutation and Rebuttal for Speaker 2 and 3.

There are 10 marks allocated for refutation and rebuttal in the Captain's closing speech. Captain's may use rebuttal in their opening speech but no marks are awarded for this.

If students do not rebut or refute, it is possible that adjudicators will award no marks for this section.

Research is essential for putting together a strong argument. Communication is essential for delivering that argument. But refutation and rebuttal are essential to debating your argument. In competitive debating, this can often be the deciding factor in winning a debate. Outside of competitive debating, the skills of refutation and rebuttal provide students with higher order skills of analysis and defence of an argument.

In order to be able to counter argue in a debate, students should research both sides of the topic or statement they are debating. That way they will be prepared for

some of the points their opposition will use and be ready to answer those arguments with facts and statements of their own.

Refutation and rebuttal are difficult skills to learn, however if students do not refute or rebut, they miss out on a potential 5 marks.

We suggest practicing the sentences below to help students gain confidence to use refutation and rebuttal:

1. "I would like to disagree with the point *student name* made as....."
2. " *student name* mentioned that..... however I have to disagree"
3. "I respectfully disagree with *student name* "
4. " The opposition would like you to believe.....however I strongly disagree...."
5. " The other team believe that.....but I disagree because....."

Using Rebuttal



There are many different ways that you can rebut someone's argument. Take a look at the example below.

If your **argument** was: "We should get a cat."

And your parents' **counter argument** was: "But your sister Susie is allergic to cats."

Here are some rebuttal strategies you could use:

1. Point out the flaws [errors] in the counterargument

E.g. Well, I heard you say that Susie is allergic, but there's actually a problem with that because Susie was around a cat yesterday and she was fine.

2. Agree with the counterargument but give them a new point/fact that contradicts their argument

E.g. I agree that's Susie's allergic to cats, but there are some breed of cats that are hypo-allergenic and won't cause people's allergies to act up.

3. Agree with the other side's support but twist the facts to suit your argument

E.g. I know that you said Susie's allergic, but couldn't owning a pet also build up her tolerance?

Is a picture worth a thousand words? OR Can I use a prop? ...the simple answer is no

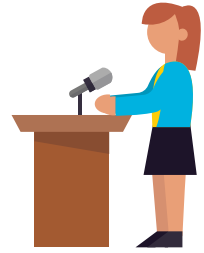


We believe that debate is about the spoken word and the ability to persuade and convince through the power of speech and well-structured argument.

At this early stage of their debates career (primary school) we feel it best to develop a student's oratorical powers rather than using a picture (or any prop) as a substitute.

You can watch the 2022 Concern Primary Debates Final on Concern's Youtube channel for an example of how to use refutation and rebuttal.





Debates Rules, Format and Marking

Creating your Debates Team

We recommend that each team has a panel of six students just in case of illness etc. **During a debate only 3 speakers are allowed per school per debate.** You can use your other members for timekeeping, research assistants, subs etc. **Please note** that research assistants are not permitted to assist the speakers on the team during the debate.

One member of the team is nominated as the captain. If you have many students taking part you may rotate speakers for each debate.

Speaking order

- The captain of the proposition speaks first.
- The captain of the opposition speaks second.
- The second member of the proposition speaks next followed by the second member of the opposition.
- The third speakers follow next.
- Finally the captains summarise, this time with **the captain of the opposition summing up first and finishing the debate with captain of the proposition.**
- The chairperson is responsible for introducing each student to speak. We recommend that this role be given to a student.

The Captain's role

The captain speaks twice and is responsible for introducing their team. There are different ways to start a speech but the following is an example:

“Chairperson, members of the audience, members of the opposition, we are here today to propose the motion that...”

The captain should introduce their team, outlining the arguments that each member will talk about. For example “Ciara will speak about how zoos have been important in conservation and Aoife will explain how schools benefit from trips to the zoo etc.”

The captain also must define the motion and provide a definition of the key words in the motion. For example: “Climate change, as defined by the Environmental Protection Agency, is a significant change in the measures of climate, such as temperature, rainfall, or wind, lasting for an extended period – decades or longer”

The captain is also responsible for speaking at the end. They need to summarise the points their team made and try to refute the arguments the opposition made or answer/defend any points against them during the debate.

Please note that marks for the Captain's second speech are only for Refutation and Rebuttal and their summary of their team's arguments.

Captains should not introduce any new points at this time as they will not receive marks. i.e In order to gain the most marks, Captains should simply focus on rebuttal/refutation.

Timing Speeches

Each speaker should have a distinct **point** to talk about. Each speaker speaks for three minutes. Students will be docked marks if they go over time so we strongly recommend that they stick to the three minutes! The bell rings at 2:30 and again at 2:50 minutes. Make sure speakers are familiar with hearing the bell to signal that time is up. If they lose their train of thought and need to wrap up, teach speakers to finish with “therefore we propose/oppose the motion that....”.

Students do not need to learn their speeches off by heart! Students are not penalised for using notes but should be encouraged to use eye contact and not read verbatim.

Team work

Each member needs to stay engaged throughout the debate and not just for their own speech. They should have paper and pen at hand and jot down any useful points. They need to listen to the speakers before them to find opportunities for rebuttal and refutation.

After their speech, they should be looking for points to assist their captain in their summation. Marks are awarded for teamwork, so each member should be aware of the importance of making a contribution where they can.

Marking Sheets

Debaters will be marked under the following areas:

Definition of the motion (Captain)

Captains must define what their team believes the motion to be. This could include the angle they are taking and definitions of key words.

Introduction of team arguments (Captain)

The Captain must also introduce themselves, their team and also what each team member will be speaking about. It is a very easy way to pick up marks!

Make sure your team hits the relevant areas of the marking sheet or they may lose points!



Organisation and Clarity

Debaters must demonstrate an organised speech that has a beginning, middle and end, and is clear in the points they are trying to argue.

Use of Facts

Debaters must back up their arguments with facts and state where they got these facts from. Concern would recommend that students have at least 3 facts in their debate and backed by reputable sources.

Relevant Arguments

Debaters must demonstrate that their arguments are relevant to the motion. i.e every point made by a student should further why they are right and the opposing team are wrong.

Persuasiveness

Here debaters are marked on how persuasive they are. This is where eye contact, use of hands and tone of voice also come into play. Students are not expected to learn their speech of by heart.

Captain's Summation

Here the captain should summarise the points made by themselves, speaker 2 and speaker 3. **They should not introduce any new information at this time.** As there are no marks awarded for new information it is of no use for the Captain to do this.

The captain also has an opportunity to gain up to 10 points by rebutting arguments made by the opposition. Captains can use rebuttals/refutation that were previously mentioned.

Team Work

Teams will also receive marks for how they work well together, if they are seen passing notes and if their speeches link in together.

Copies of the marking sheet can be found at the back of this handbook.

We strongly recommend that teachers and students are familiar with the marking sheet.

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Chairperson's Duties

This is just a guide for chairpersons - you don't have to follow this speech to the letter!

Before we begin today's Debate between [proposing school name] and [opposing school name], I'd like to welcome everyone to this event and thank you for being here today.

By engaging in the debate today, you hope that you are playing a part in the world.

In this event, I believe it is most likely that you will be given the opportunity to meet people with opposing views. I urge you all to listen carefully and to pay attention to what each speaker has to say. Please do not interrupt or try to influence the speakers.

And now, to begin today's debate I call on the first speaker of the proposition.

Thank you. Now I call on the first speaker of the proposition.

Thank you. Now I call on the second speaker from the proposition.

Thank you. Now I call on the second speaker from the proposition.

Thank you. Now I call on the third speaker from the proposition.

Thank you. Now I call on the third speaker from the proposition.

Thank you. Now I call on the captain of the opposition.

Thank you. Finally, I call on the captain of the proposition.

Now the adjudicators will take approximately 20 minutes to set up their marks. You are welcome to take a short break and return for the results.

While the Adjudicators are deliberating

If there are any questions or comments, please go to the person you might ask. If anyone has any comments or questions for other teams, all these comments and questions should be addressed to you. The chair. Please encourage audience members to offer comments on points made by the speakers and on the debate. Please do not interrupt the speakers. At times on any negative or unfair comments should not be tolerated and should be dealt with immediately. Remember - give each team equal time to answer questions or comments.

Chairperson's Duties

Concern recommend that a student takes the role of chairperson. Students are not expected to chair questions, but to merely introduce each speaker.

Remind students to pause in between each speaker as the adjudicators need time to fill in the marking sheet whether online or face to face.

There is a chairperson's speech at the end of this handbook to guide students. They can photocopy this and fill in the details.

Concern recommends that the proposing school provide the chairperson. The Chairperson then reads this speech out on the day of the debate and introduces each speaker for both schools.

CONCERN PRIMARY DEBATES

Adjudicator Marking Sheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Proposing School: _____

Opposing School: _____

PROPOSITION		OPPOSITION	
Category	Marked	Category	Marked
Quality of team's arguments	100	Quality of team's arguments	100
Clarity of team's arguments	100	Clarity of team's arguments	100
Use of evidence	100	Use of evidence	100
Use of logic	100	Use of logic	100
Use of language	100	Use of language	100
Team's presentation	100	Team's presentation	100
Team's conduct	100	Team's conduct	100
Speaker 1	100	Speaker 1	100
Quality of arguments	100	Quality of arguments	100
Clarity of arguments	100	Clarity of arguments	100
Use of evidence	100	Use of evidence	100
Use of logic	100	Use of logic	100
Use of language	100	Use of language	100
Team's presentation	100	Team's presentation	100
Team's conduct	100	Team's conduct	100
Speaker 2	100	Speaker 2	100
Quality of arguments	100	Quality of arguments	100
Clarity of arguments	100	Clarity of arguments	100
Use of evidence	100	Use of evidence	100
Use of logic	100	Use of logic	100
Use of language	100	Use of language	100
Team's presentation	100	Team's presentation	100
Team's conduct	100	Team's conduct	100
Speaker 3	100	Speaker 3	100
Quality of arguments	100	Quality of arguments	100
Clarity of arguments	100	Clarity of arguments	100
Use of evidence	100	Use of evidence	100
Use of logic	100	Use of logic	100
Use of language	100	Use of language	100
Team's presentation	100	Team's presentation	100
Team's conduct	100	Team's conduct	100
Team Captain	100	Team Captain	100
Quality of arguments	100	Quality of arguments	100
Clarity of arguments	100	Clarity of arguments	100
Use of evidence	100	Use of evidence	100
Use of logic	100	Use of logic	100
Use of language	100	Use of language	100
Team's presentation	100	Team's presentation	100
Team's conduct	100	Team's conduct	100
Total/Prop. Speaker 1	100	Total/Prop. Speaker 1	100
Total/Prop. Speaker 2	100	Total/Prop. Speaker 2	100
Total/Prop. Speaker 3	100	Total/Prop. Speaker 3	100
Total/Prop. Team Captain	100	Total/Prop. Team Captain	100

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Adjudicators Marking Sheet

It is the role of the adjudicator to determine the marks awarded during the debate.

After each speech they will award points according to the categories on the marking sheet. At the end of the debate, the adjudicators will tally the scores and determine the result. The Chief Adjudicator delivers some feedback and announces the result of the debate to the audience.

Tips for adjudicators can be found on page 12. Feedback points for the Chief Adjudicator can be found on the back of the marking sheet.

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Time Keeper's Sheet

Each speaker has 3 minutes to present their arguments.

Sound the bell to start the game with your party of five minutes and thirty seconds (5:30) and again at ten minutes fifty seconds (55:30).

The speaker should then read out their speech and return to their seat.

If a speaker goes over 3 minutes then 1 point should be deducted from their team's total points. 1 point should be deducted for every minute in excess of 3 minutes. If a speaker goes over 5 minutes then 3 points should be deducted from their team's total points. If a speaker speaks for 2:30, 2 points should be deducted, and so on.

Fill in speech lengths on the grid below, then add up time penalties.

PROPOSITION	TIME (00:00)
Captain	
Speaker 1	
Speaker 2	
Captain (2nd Speech)	
TOTAL points deducted	

OPPOSITION	TIME (00:00)
Captain	
Speaker 1	
Speaker 2	
Captain (2nd Speech)	
TOTAL points deducted	

REMARKS:

Notify the adjudicators of any time penalties before they retire to add up their marks

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CONCERN PRIMARY DEBATES

Timekeeper's Sheet

The timekeeper's role is to time each speaker. Students have 3 minutes each to speak. The timekeeper must use a stop watch or their phone to track each speech. During online debates each school should have their own timekeeper. The timekeeper should record their own schools time penalties, not the opposition.

At the back of this handbook you will find the timekeeper's sheet. Timekeepers should note if students go over time and the penalty they incur. Time keepers must give the sheet to the adjudicators at the end of the debate before they retire to calculate scores.

- If students go over 3 minutes they are deducted 1 mark
- If students go over 4 minutes they are deducted 2 marks
- If students go over 5 minutes they are deducted 3 marks

On the next page is an example of a filled in timekeeper's sheet and how marks were deducted.

PROPOSITION	TIME (00.00)
Captain	3.41 ⁻¹
Speaker 2	4.02 ⁻²
Speaker 3	2.58
Captain (2nd Speech)	2.56
Total points deducted	3

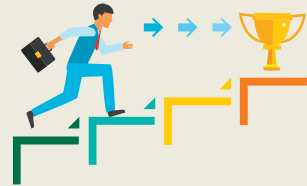
OPPOSITION	TIME (00.00)
Captain	2.59
Speaker 2	5.07 ⁻³
Speaker 3	2.48
Captain (2nd Speech)	2.47
Total points deducted	3

Next Steps

Step 1

Contact your local education centre to find out if debates are happening in your area.

Your education centre will assist you in registering and taking part.



Step 2

Visit Concern Worldwide's website here <https://www.concern.net/schools-and-youth/debates/primary-school> to download and view resources and helpful videos.

Step 3

Check out our sample speeches at the back of this handbook to help your students prepare for their debates.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Each ESCI Centre is responsible for the administration of the Concern Debates Programme. Please contact your local education centre focal person with any complaints.

If you have feedback on the competition or resources please email primarydebates@concern.net



A Guide for Adjudicators - How to Mark a Debate



Thank you for agreeing to be an adjudicator; the Concern Primary Debates simply couldn't happen without you. We have lots of helpful online resources here <https://www.concern.net/schools-and-youth/debates/primary-school> which will show you how to mark a debate and what to expect. You can watch the instruction video for Adjudicators here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=59OvH-YYamU>

Adjudicator FAQs

How should I prepare for the debate?

We recommend you go into the debate with an open mind and pay close attention to the marking sheet.

Our online instructional video here will also help <https://www.concern.net/schools-and-youth/debates/primary-school>

I have been asked to be a chief adjudicator- what does this entail?

As Chief Adjudicator you will be expected to deliver feedback to students at the end of the debate and announce the result.

Chief Adjudicators should

- be constructive with feedback
- focus on the positives
- bear in mind that the teams are very young
- give areas to work on but in a constructive way
- not single out any student under any circumstances

What am I looking for from each speaker?

The Concern Debates as a competition is focused more on the issues as opposed to public speaking.

Do I need to time the debate?

No- there will be a time keeper present. Each student has 3.00 minutes to speak. If they go over this time, they will be penalised. A bell will ring at 2.30 and at 2.50.

Adjudicators should stop marking when the 3 minutes have expired. The second bell will ring at 2:50 so stop marking approximately 10 seconds after hearing it.

The timekeepers will inform you of any penalties.

REMEMBER - as an adjudicator it is your job to be completely neutral and impartial. You must be careful to assign marks according to the marking sheet and not because you personally agree or disagree with a particular side of the argument.

The following tips are here to help you to fill out the marking sheet.

MARKS for Captain, Speaker 2 and Speaker 3:

We recommend the following guide for assigning marks

Excellent	5
Good/Very Good	3 or 4
Need for improvement	1 or 2

Marks for Captain's Summation:

Excellent	9 or 10
Very Good	7 or 8
Good	5 or 6
Need for improvement	4 or less

Marking Captains' Speeches

Introduction of team arguments: The captain of each team will open the debate. In their 3 minute speech the captain should:

- **Define the motion:** Go over the main words of the motion and define any words or phrases that need clarification. For example in the motion 'Climate Change is not my problem' The captain will need to define (very briefly) what his/her team means by 'climate change' and should say why his/her team believes it is not their problem...
- **Introduce his/her teammates and name the three arguments his/her team will be using in the debate** e.g. "As team captain I will argue that as a country Ireland is too small to make a difference to global climate change. Our second speaker Siobhan will argue that India, China and United States must deal with Climate Change first, and our third speaker Cian, will argue that scientists are already coming up with solutions..."
- **Start the debate:** The captain will then give the first of his/her teams three arguments which in the above example will be to argue 'why Ireland is too small to make a difference.'

The Captain of the opposition will then go through the same process only defining, introducing and arguing from his/her teams' side of the motion.

Organisation and Clarity:

- Is the speaker well prepared?
- Is there an order or structure to the arguments used?
- Is the overall argument clear?

Use of Facts:

- Did the speaker present any facts (statistics or quotes) to support their argument rather than just giving their opinion?
- Did the speaker name the sources of these facts? E.g. "According to the United Nations..."

Relevance of arguments:

- Did the speaker stay on topic?
- Did the speaker present up to date information?
- Were the examples they used linked to the point they were making?

Refutation and Rebuttal: This is a very important debating skill. Using refutation and rebuttal to counter an opponent's argument is what separates debating from public speaking.

- Did the speaker challenge their opponents on a particular point?
- Did the speaker effectively answer or address any of the points raised by their opponents?
- If the student did not use rebuttal/ refutation it is not possible to award marks in this section.

Persuasiveness

- Did the speaker engage the audience by making eye contact, effective use of his/her hands or varying the tone of their voice?
- Did the speaker use ‘appropriate’ passion?
- Did the speaker use humour?*

*Humour can be an effective ‘tool’ in debate, however make sure it is appropriate, fair to the opponents and relevant to the motion. Remember, debaters should ‘play the ball not the (wo)man’. **Sarcasm and inappropriate humour should be docked 1 or 2 marks in the Persuasiveness section.**

Captain’s Summation

The Captain’s summation is like a Barrister’s closing address before the jury. **No new information should be introduced at this stage.** The Captain’s duty is to:

- Recap his/her own team’s arguments
- Rebut the arguments of their opposing side

Points for Teamwork

- Did the debaters work together as a team?
- Did the debaters refer to each other’s arguments?
- Did they help each other during the debate by passing on (whispering or writing on a piece of paper) possible points of rebuttal to the captain for his/her closing speech?



Lesson Plans

LESSON 1 - Where do you stand?



Purpose

This activity invites students to form an opinion on a particular issue, to not be afraid to let others know where they stand, to give reasons for their opinion and to change their opinion if persuaded to do so after discussion with others.

Materials

Three sheets of chart paper, each labelled in large letters with one of the following:

- Agree
- Disagree
- Not Sure

Preparation

Place one of the three sheets in each corner of the room.

Prepare a list of statements upon which you want students to Take a Stand.

TOP TIP! This is a great way to introduce your upcoming debate motion to your class



This activity is best suited to an area where students can move about freely such as a hall or gymnasium.

Activity

Gather the class in the centre of the room and point out the three sheets in each of the corners.

Tell the students that you are going to read out a number of statements and that you want the students to go and stand in the corner that best describes how they feel about the statement.

An example of statements are:

- School uniforms should be banned
- Homework is good for us
- There is nothing I can do about climate change

Encourage students to voice their opinions from their respective corners... “so this group over here disagrees with banning school uniforms? Tell us why?”

After some discussion from each of the corners ask the students if any of them would like to change corners and if so to give a reason...perhaps they were convinced by a comment from one of the other corners...

Debrief

Once students are finished the moving debate, ask them what arguments they found the most compelling and why.

Lesson 2 - I couldn't disagree more

Purpose:

This is a good exercise to help students listen to another point of view as well as learn how to respectfully disagree (refutation and rebuttal) while offering their own point of view.



Preparation:

Find/create a space where the class can line up facing one another.

Prepare a list of statements similar to Activity 1.

Activity

Have students line up facing one another about two feet apart.

One side is 'proposition' the other is 'opposition'.

Read out a statement, e.g "all Zoos should be banned".

The first person on the Proposition side repeats the line and gives a reason why e.g 'All zoos should be banned because animals belong in the wild and not behind bars'.

The first person in the Opposition line then says; 'I couldn't disagree more because animals in zoos today are extremely well treated and get lots of proper care.

The second person in the proposition line then says I couldn't disagree with you more, all zoos should be banned because...

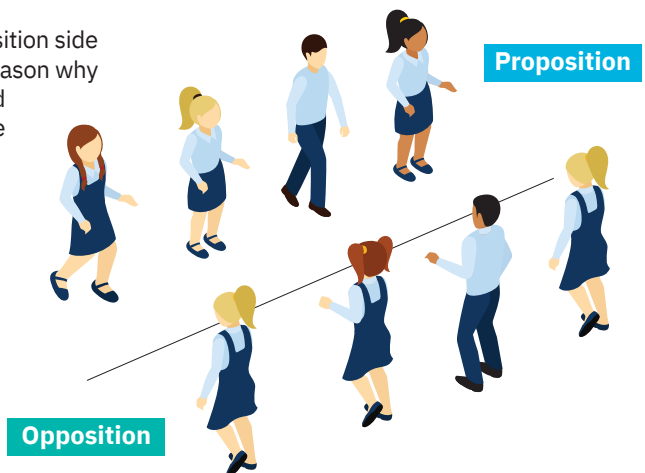
And so it goes back and forth until no new points can be made.

Once all of the students have had a chance to propose or oppose the motion ask the proposition side to repeat any points or arguments they heard from the opposition side and vice versa.

Ask for a show of hands on the motion... does the class believe Zoos should be banned?

Move on to the next statement.

A student who would prefer not to make a point for whatever reason can just say 'pass'.



Lesson 3 - I Am The Most Useful!

Purpose: This is a good exercise to use with your whole class to get them used to speaking publically. Using everyday items that students are familiar with will help them to speak and have some fun!

Preparation:

- Post-its or scrap paper with everyday household items written on them, envelope.
- Students in groups of six

Activity

- Place students in groups of six and ask to stand
- Write a list of household items (fork, spoon, tv, bed etc.) on six post-its and place in envelope

- Invite each member of group to take a piece of paper
- Starting with the first member of the team, ask them to speak for one minute about their item. Encourage the students to keep talking as much as possible even if it's nonsense.
- Once every student has spoken, revert back to the first student and get them to counter argue with everyone on their team why they are more useful than every other item
- Once everyone has had their go ask the group to vote on which item they think is the most important. Ask students what persuaded them to vote a certain way



Lesson 4 - Communication Styles

Purpose: This activity can be used with your whole class and is a good introduction to what makes a 'good public speaker'.

Preparation

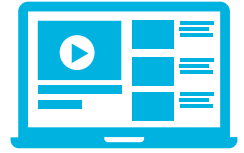
Post-its with topical items and communication styles (listed below). Envelopes. Place students into groups of six

- Place students in groups of six
- Write a list of topical items (fidget spinners) on 6 post its and place in an envelope
- In another envelope have six pieces of paper with the below written
 - Speak using hands
 - Speak looking at the floor
 - Speak too loud
 - Speak too quietly
 - Speak saying eh a lot
 - Speaking confidently
- Ask students to pick a piece of paper from both envelopes i.e they get Fidget Spinners and Speak using hands
- Ask each student to speak on their topic for 30 seconds with the description of how to talk
- Ask students afterwards which speeches were the best and why



Debrief: Explain to students that there are 5 marks awarded on the marking sheet for their communication skills.

Lesson 5 - Who said it best?



Purpose: This activity will help students discern different styles of communicating

Preparation: Access to laptop, youtube

Activity

- Play clips from famous speakers e.g Trump, Michelle Obama etc
- Ask students what makes them a good speaker or bad speaker
- Ask students to focus on their tone of voice, eye contact and hand movements

Debrief

Having watched these clips, discuss which gestures and mannerisms would they consider using in their own debates and which would they like to avoid.

Lesson 6 - Sort it Out!



Purpose:

This activity will help students tell the difference between reliable source and unreliable source

Preparation:

Broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, articles from wikipedia

- Have clippings of a variety of broadsheet and tabloid newspapers and articles from wikipedia
- Give a variety to each group of students
- Ask students to look through the clippings and decide which did they think would be the most reliable source
- Explain that in their debates they should quote where they got their sources from and that some sources can be more reliable than others
- Remember that there are 5 marks awarded for sources!

Debrief

Ask students if they can think of any other ways to back up their arguments. Where else could they find information?

Explain to students that anyone can edit wikipedia articles. Do they think that makes wikipedia a reliable source?

Check out this helpful website here about spotting Fake News <https://www.webwise.ie/teachers/what-is-fake-news/>



TEMPLATE SPEECHES

**Below are some templates to help
get your team started!**

Captains Opening Speech:

Chairperson, adjudicators, members of the audience, and members of the proposition/ opposition. My name is _____, and I am here with my team to strongly oppose/ propose the motion that “_____”.

Allow me to begin by defining the motion... (Here the Captain should explain important words from the motion using a quality dictionary.).

I will begin by... (Summarise what you will prove and how.)

Our Second Speaker is _____ and she/he will... (Summarise what the Second Speaker will prove and how.).

_____ is our Third Speaker and will be responsible for summing up our argument. She/he will also... (Summarise what the Third Speaker will prove and how.).

(Now the Captain should make their own point/points).

I believe that I have proven... (Sum up your points and what they have proven).

Thank you for listening, and I am sure that you are now convinced that you must oppose/ propose the motion.

Second/Third Speaker Speech:

Chairperson, adjudicators, members of the audience, and members of the proposition/ opposition. My name is _____, and I am also here with my team to strongly oppose/ propose the motion that “_____”.

I will speaking about... (Summarise what you will prove and how.) and summarising our team’s argument.

(Now the Speaker should make their own point).

(The Speaker should also attempt to refute/rebut between their own point/points).

I believe that I have proven... (Sum up your points and what they have proven)

Thank you for listening, and I am sure that you are now convinced that you must oppose/ propose the motion.

Chairperson's Duties



CONCERN
PRIMARY
DEBATES



This is just a guide for chairpersons – you don't have to follow this speech to the letter!

Welcome everyone to today's Debate between (proposing school name and town or village) and (opposing school name and town or village).

And many thanks to name of the host school or venue for hosting this debate.

By exploring the issues we're debating today we hope that you as young people will learn more about each other, about our environment, and about our place in the world.

As you know, a debate is much like a conversation or an argument between two or more people with opposing views. I urge you all to listen carefully and to pay attention to what both teams have to say. Please do not interrupt or try to distract the debaters.

And now, to begin today's debate I call on the first speaker of the proposition
student's name from school name

Thank you. Now I call on the first speaker of the opposition from school
name

Thank you. Now I call on the second speaker from the proposition.

Thank you. Now I call on the second speaker from the opposition.

Thank you. Now I call on the third speaker from the proposition.

Thank you. Now I call on the third speaker from the opposition

Thank you. Now I call on again, the **captain of the opposition**.

Thank you. **Finally**, I call on the **captain of the proposition**.

Now the adjudicators will take approximately 20 minutes to tot up their marks. You are welcome to take a short break and return for the results.

While the Adjudicators are Deliberating

If there are still people on the online call or in-person you might ask if anyone has any comments or questions for either team. All these comments and questions should be addressed to you, the chair. Please encourage audience members to offer comments or ask questions while the adjudicators are away. Respect for both teams is to be maintained at all times so any negative or unfair comments should not be tolerated and should be dealt with immediately. Remember - give both teams equal time to answer questions or comments.

Adjudicator Marking Sheet



**CONCERN
PRIMARY
DEBATES**



Venue: _____ Date: _____

Proposing School: _____

Opposing School: _____

PROPOSITION

MARKS

Captain

Introduction of team's arguments/
Definition of the motion /5

Organisation and Clarity /5

Use of facts /5

Relevance of arguments /5

Persuasiveness /5

Total Prop. Captain /25

Speaker 2

Organisation and Clarity /5

Relevance of arguments /5

Use of facts /5

Use of rebuttal /5

Persuasiveness /5

Total Prop. Speaker 2 /25

Speaker 3

Organisation and Clarity /5

Relevance of arguments /5

Use of facts /5

Use of rebuttal /5

Persuasiveness /5

Total Prop. Speaker 3 /25

OPPOSITION

MARKS

Captain

Introduction of team's arguments/
Definition of the motion /5

Organisation and Clarity /5

Use of facts /5

Relevance of arguments /5

Persuasiveness /5

Total Prop. Captain /25

Speaker 2

Organisation and Clarity /5

Relevance of arguments /5

Use of facts /5

Use of rebuttal /5

Persuasiveness /5

Total Prop. Speaker 2 /25

Speaker 3

Organisation and Clarity /5

Relevance of arguments /5

Use of facts /5

Use of rebuttal /5

Persuasiveness /5

Total Prop. Speaker 3 /25

PROPOSITION	MARKS
Captain's Summation	
Recap of team's arguments	<input type="text"/> /10
Rebutting Opposition's arguments	<input type="text"/> /10
Total Captain's Summation	<input type="text"/> /20
Points for teamwork	<input type="text"/> /5
TEAM TOTAL	<input type="text"/> /100
Deduct Time Penalties (deduct 1 point per minute over the 3 minute limit)	- <input type="text"/>
PROP. FINAL TOTAL	<input type="text"/>

OPPOSITION	MARKS
Captain's Summation	
Recap of team's arguments	<input type="text"/> /10
Rebutting Opposition's arguments	<input type="text"/> /10
Total Captain's Summation	<input type="text"/> /20
Points for teamwork	<input type="text"/> /5
TEAM TOTAL	<input type="text"/> /100
Deduct Time Penalties (deduct 1 point per minute over the 3 minute limit)	- <input type="text"/>
OPP. FINAL TOTAL	<input type="text"/>

The motion was: **please circle**

Carried (proposition accumulated the most points)

Defeated (opposition accumulated the most points)



Adjudicator Feedback to students:

- ✓ Be positive and constructive
- ✓ Do not select one student for particular praise and **never** single out an individual student for criticism, rather refer to teams as a whole in a constructive way
- ✓ Highlight particular areas of strength such as the amount of research, the rebuttal, the clarity of argument and persuasion skills such as body language, use of voice and eye contact
- ✓ Give one or two suggestions for improvement such as "try to avoid reading your speeches and over-reliance on notes" or "make sure you let us know where you got your information from by quoting your sources", or "make sure you listen to your opponents and directly address their points by rebutting them" or if there have been time penalties to "make sure you stick within the two minute limit"
- ✓ Do not show the marking sheet to the debaters but be available to them after the debate if they seek out further advice.

On behalf of Concern Worldwide, your local Education Centre and the Association of Teacher Education Centres Ireland;

Thank You

Time Keeper's Sheet



**CONCERN
PRIMARY
DEBATES**



- Each speaker has 3 minutes to present their arguments.
- Sound the bell (or tap the glass with your pen!) at two minutes and thirty seconds (02.30) and again at two minutes fifty seconds (02.50).
- The speaker should then wind up their speech and return to their seat.
- If a speaker goes over 3 minutes then 1 point should be deducted from that team's total points. 1 point should be deducted for every minute (or part of) they go over the 3 minute time limit e.g. if a student speaks for 3.01, 1 point is deducted from the team's total score. If a student speaks for 4.01, 2 marks should be deducted, and so on.
- Fill in speech-timings on the grid below, then add up time penalties.

PROPOSITION	TIME (00.00)
Captain	
Speaker 2	
Speaker 3	
Captain (2nd Speech)	
TOTAL points deducted	

OPPOSITION	TIME (00.00)
Captain	
Speaker 2	
Speaker 3	
Captain (2nd Speech)	
TOTAL points deducted	

REMEMBER:

Notify the adjudicators of any time penalties before they retire to add up their marks





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primarydebates@concern.net

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