

## Criteria for Evaluating Debate Performance

### Content

All of the information that you present should be accurate. You and your team should demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of all aspects of the issue and should discuss all of the points that best support your case. You should not be expected to bring up points that do damage to your case - that is the job of the opposition.

### Preparation

Each member of the team is responsible for giving a well-constructed opening statement of a minute to a minute and a half in length. During the course of the debate you should have facts at your fingertips and counter-arguments ready to go depending on the performance of the opposition. You are permitted to bring into the debate: note cards, outlines, books and any other helpful resource. You should also be prepared to make a closing statement of approximately one minute that emphasizes your most important points.

### Argumentation

The arguments you make during the debate should be logical and demonstrate a clear analysis of the issue. Appropriate emphasis should be given to your strongest arguments, but you shouldn't harp on only a single point for too long. Finally, you should demonstrate that you have heard and understand your opponents arguments by meeting them head on and giving your best counter-arguments.

### Presentation

You should speak confidently and with conviction. In order to do this, you must make eye contact with the class and speak clearly.

## Structure for the Debate

I. Opening Statements - Each team will be responsible for an opening statement which should take about **two minutes per team member** and no more to deliver (1-1½ typed pages, double-spaced). The opening statements will be *collected by me two days before the debate and evaluated*. The purpose of these statements is to lay out the outline of your case in a persuasive manner; you should introduce each of your strongest arguments. **\*\*A copy of each opening statement also must be given to the other side two school days before the day of the debate. (If primary source documents will be used/quoted in your presentation, a copy of each of those must be given to the opposing side as well two days before!)\*\*** Make sure that each team member covers some other aspect of the team's debate position [there should NOT be a lot of repetitive points made by several team members—**coordinate your presentations!!**]

II. Hot Seat Round - After each opening statement, each side will have the opportunity to put the person who just delivered the opening statement in the "hot seat," by asking a series of questions. First the con side will ask question after question to the person who delivered the pro side's first opening statement for a period of up to **two minutes**. After the con side has delivered their first opening

statement, the roles will be reversed and so on until everyone in the debate has delivered their opening statement and then been cross examined. *The side asking questions should not use this time to make statements or argue;* the person responding should answer the questions as directly as possible. The purpose of the questions should be to perhaps expose a weakness in the opponent's argument, or force the other side to commit to a position that you will attack later. After this round you should know exactly what your opponent is saying. In any case, if you are the questioner, this is not the time to drag out an argument or refute everything the opposition says - that will come in the next round.

III. Rebuttal Round - Each team will be responsible for a **three minute rebuttal**. This is the time to: first, defend against any attacks made on your team's position and second, go on the offensive yourself. *Don't hold anything back during this round* - take advantage of all the weaknesses you have discovered in your opponent's argument during the previous rounds. **DON'T** just rehash the points you made in your opening statements!

IV. Prep Time - Before the turn of someone on your team to speak, your team may take a "time out" to consult and plan what to say. Each team will have a cumulative total of **three minutes** of this prep time.

V. Closing Statements - Each team member on the PRO side will begin with a one minute closing statement [this should be based on what the CON side presented in their arguments and rebuttal]. After the PRO side has completed their closing statements, then the CON side will proceed.

VI. Questions from the class and the free for all round - At this point in the debate the class will be given the opportunity to ask questions of whichever side they choose. A **maximum of ten minutes** will be provided. Often times this part of the debate can be chaotic. I will be attempting to moderate the proceedings.

## Grading Policy for AHAP Debates

Your grade will be based on the following items:

1. The Debate itself - according to the "criteria for evaluating debate performance."  
**30%** of the final grade.
2. The Opening Statement - according to the criteria laid out above and to be collected the day of the debate. **15%** of the final grade.
3. Questions for the opposition - On the day of the debate I will collect three to five questions that you plan to ask the other side during the "hot seat" round. These questions will be evaluated based on how well designed they seem to gain useful information or penetrate to the weakness of the other side's argument. **5%** of the final grade.
4. Four to five page paper - The paper should have three parts:
  - a) an explanation of the arguments on one side of the issue
  - b) an explanation of the arguments on the other side of the issue
  - c) your opinion - which can be different from the side you were forced to take during the debate.

This paper should contain a bibliography of at least five sources and end notes should be used as citations used whenever appropriate. The paper is due exactly one cycle after the debate takes place and is worth **50%** of the final grade for the debate.

# Cross-Examination Questions

Source: Breaking Down Barriers

## 1. Ask Questions to Clarify Arguments

What was your second point?

How many people are you saying died during this period?

In your opinion who was most at fault for the war starting?

How are you saying these policies helped the economy?

## 2. Ask Questions about the Quality of your Opponent's Evidence

What was your source for that evidence? When was that book written?

Was that the historian's opinion, or is s/he claiming this as fact?

## 3. Ask Questions to get your Opponent to Admit their Case has Weaknesses

Are you aware of any plans at the time to fix this problem other than the plan that was attempted?

Do you admit that on this occasion many people died?

Do you admit that this leader/country did anything to start the war?

## 4. Ask Questions to Set Up Arguments

(For instance, if your opponent is arguing that Cromwell was bad for England because he was intolerant of certain religious groups, you might proceed in the following manner).

So, are you arguing that religious intolerance is a bad thing? Does it then follow that if one government is more tolerant than another, that it is a better government from the perspective of religious tolerance?

(After getting your opponent to admit this, wait until the rebuttal round to point out that Cromwell's government was more tolerant than all of his opponents had been, or were planning to be).

## 5. Maintain Control of the Cross-Examination

Allowing your opponent to answer your questions doesn't mean your opponent is entitled to give a full speech each time s/he answers. Just give him/her the needed time to answer. Likewise, don't make arguments yourself during your time to ask questions - you are simply wasting the time you could be using to ask more questions, letting your opponent off the hot seat and inviting them to answer your arguments in kind and score points.

## Debate Topics

1. Resolved, *that as President, Thomas Jefferson was faithful to his republican values.*
2. Resolved, *Reconstruction was a "splendid failure."*
3. Resolved, *Progressivism failed because it brought about reforms that were superficial at best, and failed to seriously address issues of inequality in American society.*
4. Resolved, *that the New Deal was an economic failure.*
5. Resolved, *that Richard Nixon was America's last liberal Republican President.*

Course 1	PRO	CON
1	Brian N., Kamil S.	Zaid Q., John W. Schw.
2	Johanna A., John C., Matt T.	Alex B., Carly B., Alvina Z.
3	Brian D., Ali G.	Michael G., Matt H.
4	Ariel H., Kathryn A., Nick L.	Lindsey K., Andrew P., Jake R.
5	Eric S., Jon O. Schw.	Hikari S., Jacob T.

Course 4	PRO	CON
1	Habbah C., Rachel M., Noah S.	Hannah G., Alec S., Jake S.
2	Adam B., Katie B., Adrianna H.	Amanda C., Gae Min L., Nick W.
3	Danielle B., Tim F., Meredith L.	Jake G., Colby L., Emma Z.
4	Corrine B., Nathaniel H., Ben H.	Joe H., Madelyn P., David T.
5	Jason B., Rafi S.	Stefan H., Zach R.

Course 7	PRO	CON
1	Anna A., Austin B., Will Q.	Michael M., Teddy N., Michelle N.
2	Annalie A., Sneha B.	Connor G., Steven H., Ben W.
3	Josh B., Michael B., Dan T.	Olivia F., Andrew S., Ross T.
4	Karl E., Meredith S., Max S.	Cristiana A., Zach S., Russell S.
5	Kelsey M., Ved P.	Lindsay M., John S.