

Procedure for Setting up a Debate

1. Provide background information in the form of lectures, readings, research, and/or discussions on the controversial topic to be debated.
2. Decide how the debate will be conducted. It could be conducted individually, in dyads of 2 persons, or in groups of 3-5 persons.
3. Either assign members to teams or have a sign-up sheet.
4. Explain ground rules.
5. Give students time to assign roles and decide how they will prepare and conduct debate.
6. Allow time to present arguments. Each debate team can post their arguments on the discussion board.
7. Allow time for teams to prepare rebuttals. Each debate team then posts their rebuttal on the discussion board.
8. Conduct whole-class discussion to summarize important issues. Discussions can occur synchronously using a chat room or asynchronously on the discussion board.

Alternatives for Setting up a Debate

1. Students select the side of an issue contrary to their own views, form teams, and discuss, present, and argue against an opposing team.
2. Students work in pairs instead of teams.
3. Students debate an issue that has 3 sides.
4. Students use an audio tool such as Wimba or Elluminate for the debates.
5. Students research the topic.
6. Instructor provides background materials on topic.
7. Students write a follow-up document on surprises they encountered, new information they gained, and/or ideas that were clarified or confirmed.