

CC CHANGE COMMUNICATIONS

"Communication for Change, Change for Development"



UNDEF



The United Nations
Democracy Fund

Students' Guide

On

How to Conduct a Debate

By Shifu Ngalla

For

UNDEF-Change Comms Project

(Cameroon)

CC CHANGE COMMUNICATIONS



"Communication for Change, Change for Development"

UNDEF



The United Nations
Democracy Fund

Students' Guide

On

How to Conduct a Debate

By Shifu Ngalla

For

UNDEF-Change Comms Project Cameroon

Yaoundé,

2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: DEBATE VOCABULARY

- 1.0 Debate_____
- 1.1 Argument_____
- 1.2 Rebuttal_____
- 1.2.1 Use of logic_____
- 1.2.2 Pick the overall important points in the arguments of the other team_____
- 1.3. Team_____
- 1.3.1 Team line_____
- 1.4 Matter_____
- 1.5 Method_____
- 1.5.2 Individual method_____
- 1.6. Manner_____

CHAPTER 2: DEBATE TOPICS AND STAKEHOLDERS_____

- 2.0 Defining the topic_____
- 2.1 What kind of topic for a debate?_____
- 2.1.2 Processing the topic into a debate topic_____
- 2.2 Actors in the debate_____
- 2.2.1 Debaters_____
- 2.2.2 Speaker_____
- 2.2.3 Moderator_____
- 2.2.4 Time keeper_____
- 2.2.5 Team of judges_____
- 2.2.6 The audience_____

CHAPTER 4: HOW TO PREPARE FOR A DEBATE AND HOW A DEBATE SESSION UNFOLDS_____

- 3.0 Intellectual preparation for debaters_____
- 3.1 Intellectual preparation for the moderator_____
- 3.2. Material preparations for the debate_____
- 3.2.1 Sitting positions_____
- 3.3. How the debate unfolds_____
- 3.3.1 First speaker of the Affirmative _____
- 3.3.2 First speaker of the Negative_____
- 3.3.2 Second speaker of the Affirmative_____
- 3.3.3 Second speaker for the Negative_____
- 3.3.4 Third speaker for the Affirmative_____
- 3.3.5 The third speaker for the Negative_____
- 3.4 Judging the teams_____
- 3.5 Audience as participant and judge_____

3.6 Role of Judges _____

3.7 No-winner or all-winner option _____

CHAPTER 4: WHAT TO DO, AND WHAT NOT TO DO IN A DEBATE SESSION _____

4.1 Eye contact for the speaker _____

4.3 Body _____

4.4 Your look and looks of the speaker _____

4.5 Use of big words _____

4.6 More useful tips _____

4.7 Language of democratic debaters _____

4.8 When talking about the opponent _____

4.9 Making a point for one's team _____

4.10 Concluding an argument for the team _____

4.11 What NOT to do, (Protecting country and democracy) _____

SOME TOPICS FOR DEBATE FOR STUDENTS _____

Introduction

Developing a guide on what a debate is and on how to organize it automatically raises a question: a guide, what for? Stated differently, of what benefit is a debate for secondary school students in Cameroon today? The answer is simple. A debate is definitely very useful to students as individuals and as a learning community in several ways.

It is a learning exercise. A debate is essentially an activity in oral performance, that is, it is based mainly on “speaking” either in English, French or home language. Debates therefore help students to improve their language proficiency in general, speaking skills and art of public speaking in particular. Debates give students a new and structured experience of spoken English, French and home languages. They make students reason and speak in a structured and orderly manner.

Debates help students develop spontaneous and critical thinking capacity. They also build the capacity for the students talk about things in a precise manner. The fact of being alert and quick to identify faults or weaknesses in the arguments of the opponents, and the ability to puncture those weaknesses with stronger arguments requires fast and very critical thinking. In a debate, each statement is made for a purpose and is intended to persuade. It is based on fact and logic. Debates therefore have the potentials to render students intellectually very sharp. Debates also initiate students to **sharing knowledge** and to **rigorous intellectual practices and traditions** common in academic milieus.

The level of planning that goes into the material and intellectual preparations and the actual organization of debate session helps students to develop a **sense of organization and responsibility**. The art of debating in itself requires a lot of emotional stability to withstand the fire of arguments and cross-argument from both sides. All of this combines to refine the students emotionally and psychologically.

At the social level, debates also help students to overcome shyness, serve as a mirror for them to assess their intellectual and social levels. They also strengthen the spirit of camaraderie and cohesion among students deepens their sense of belonging to the academic community. Debates provide entertainment and make the school milieu dynamic.

We can equally use the debate as a forum to popularize democratic values and practices. The debate gives students the opportunity to express themselves freely. **Freedom of expression** is a fundamental democratic value. During debates, students pick facts and examples as evidence to their case. In doing so, they provide a lot of information from several sources to the audience. The audience then enjoys the **right of access to information**. Furthermore, people have the possibility during debate sessions, to participate in discussions on issues of public interest. They can criticize the way government manages public resources. They can also suggest the ways they think those resources should be managed for the benefit of everybody. This can influence the government and administrative officials to change policy and practices and may lead to a better management of government business for the good of all citizens. In this way, participation in a **debate forum promotes governance** which is a core value in democracy today.

Furthermore, in a debate two parties are involved in heated exchange on a topic from **different viewpoints, contradicting each other, but all of this is done in mutual respect**. Debates therefore help to develop the abilities of the participants to understand and respect the rights of those who hold opinions and beliefs that are different from theirs, cultivate the art of gentlemanly or gentle lady talking and respect of differences. These are all practices that promote the growth of a democratic culture in a diverse socio-cultural setting like Cameroon. This practice also strengthens citizenship responsibility among students and builds patriotism.

We can equally, use debates to popularize democratic values is to purposely choose topics on values like **gender, governance, minorities and human rights etc**. We can do this by deliberately choosing topics which are based on these democratic values. A purposeful choice of topics on these values, automatically promotes them.

Finally, in a debate each team seeks to persuade the other that their position is the proper one. The art of persuasion is the basis on which political campaigns are generally conceived. Debating is very much like a mini-political campaign. Debates and debating help

students to overcome stage fear and help them develop skills for public campaigns for political or other purposes.

All in all, debates are very useful to students. This handbook has been developed to give the students a basic knowledge of what a debate is, and how to organize one. We have written it in an easy-to-understand manner for the students. We have drawn the bulk of the material from so many sources on the internet. We have simplified, edited and contextualized the material to ease understanding and application for students. It is expected that, it will inspire students to join debate clubs in their schools. They stand to reap lots of intellectual and social benefits in doing so.

CHAPTER 1

DEBATE VOCABULARY

2.0 Debate

A **debate** is, basically, an argument. It is a verbal exchange or sharing of ideas on a given topic between two persons, or two teams. But, not all kinds of exchange between persons or groups of persons can be called a debate. A debate is not an undisciplined shouting match between parties that passionately believe in a particular point of view. For an exchange to be called a debate, it must be conducted in an orderly manner and according to strict rules agreed upon by all the parties concerned.

. A debate therefore is basically a formal and structured or planned argument on a topic agreed upon by the parties involved.

1.1 Argument

An argument is a statement which explains why a topic is true or false. It is a statement which gives reason to why **Team A** believes the topic is true, or, why **Team B** believes the topic is false.

Example: *“Government should provide text books for free for primary school children in rural areas of Cameroon”*

In this topic, the argument for Team A could be this:

*Government should provide text books for free for primary school children in rural Cameroon (argument:) **because over 90% of their parents are too poor to buy the books.***

The argument for Team B in the same topic could be:

Government should NOT provide text books for free for primary school children in rural Cameroon (argument): because, it will be more useful for the children in the rural communities if government spends that money to enable them have free medical care than to have free text books.

Government should NOT provide text books for free for primary school children in rural Cameroon (argument) because, a poverty level survey conducted in 2011 indicates that, 88% of the parents in the rural areas have annual incomes of between 400,000 to 450,000 Francs. They are therefore financially capable of buying books for their children.

1.2 Rebuttal

The essence of a debate is to say that, we are right, and the others are not right, or are not quite right. A debate exercise therefore consists essentially of each team presenting points in favour of their case and criticizing the arguments presented by the other team. This practice of presenting points to support our case, and criticizing the points presented by the other team in order to weaken them in a debate is called **rebuttal**. In a debate, rebuttal arguments also provide an opportunity to answer attacks that have been made by the opposing team.

There are **three main things** we need to do in a rebuttal. We need to:

1.2.1 Use logic

To say that the other team or our opponents in a debate are wrong is not enough. We need to prove that they are wrong. We can do this by picking on the main point in the argument presented by our opponents and demonstrate that, that argument does not make sense.

An example in the **use of logic** in a rebuttal: *Government should provide text books for free for primary school children in rural Cameroon, **Team A's** argument **FOR** is: "because over 90% of their parents are too poor to buy the books".*

Use of logic: *A poverty level survey conducted in 2011 indicates that, 88% of the parents in the rural areas of Cameroon have annual incomes of between 400,000 to 450,000 Francs. but consume over 75% of that money on beer consumption. Logically, this means, they have the financial capacity to pay school books for their children for a maximum of 50,000 every school year. The proble therfeore is not that of poverty or low incomes of parents. The problem is that of parental irresponsibility.*

This kind of rebuttal requires fast thinking. This can be quite challenging, but enjoyable in a debating exercise.

1.2.2 Pick the overall important points in the arguments of the other team: Try to destroy the most important points of the other side's case. To do this, you need to listen very attentively and critically when the **First Speaker** of the other team is speaking. He is certainly going to briefly outline what the rest of his/her team mates are going to say as debating unfolds. You can then pick on the main points and then, attack. But, remember, do not attack the person, attack the person's points. If you call someone, ugly, short or dwarf, that does not make what the person says wrong. Insulting somebody in a debate makes your team lose points and also makes you as speaker to lose honor and respect.

1.3. Team

In a debate, the debaters on the two sides constitute teams, and not groups. In a group, individual members are free to express their individual ideas and opinions the way they want and when they want. But, in a debate, the members have one vision, one focus and one line of thought and action, that of convincing the others that, their case is correct. Sometimes, individual members in a debate team have to defend a point or an idea in which they do not personally believe. What matters is the team's points of view and not that of the individual.

1.3.1 Team line

Debating, as we have seen, is a team event. It is important that the three speakers work together as a team. The **TEAM LINE** is the basic statement of "why the topic is true" (for the affirmative) and "why the topic is false" (for the negative). It should be a short sentence, presented by the first speaker of each team and used by the other two speakers to enforce the idea of teamwork.

1.4 Matter

Matter is what you say. It is the substance of your speech. Matter is made up of arguments and examples. An **argument** as we have already explained is a statement which gives the reason why the topic is true or false. The argument in a debate generally begins with “because.....”

An **example** is a *fact or piece of evidence* which supports an argument. In the topic: *Government should provide text books for free for primary school children in rural Cameroon*, the argument for the Affirmative is: “because over 90% of their parents are too poor to buy the books”,

An example as piece of evidence to support this argument could be:

“A survey involving 300 families heads, carried out by Change Communications to determine poverty levels in 60 villages in Donga Mantung Division of the North West region of Cameroon this year indicates, reveals that, 280 of the family heads cannot make an annual income of 23000 CFA Francs. This makes it impossible for them to buy even a single text book for their children”

Examples and **arguments** therefore make up the substance or matter of the debate. But, any examples that you use should be *relevant* to the topic at hand. Examples which have very little or nothing to do with the topic only make a speech look weak and lacking substance. In the same way, matter cannot just be a long list of examples. You do not win a debate by creating the biggest pile of facts. Do not list out a pile of facts and think it will make your team to win. You should weave the facts in a way that, they help to illustrate, demonstrate and support your points. You should also build the facts to help you criticize and demonstrate that, the points made by your opponents do not make sense.

1.5 Method

Method is how you organize what you say. There are two main methods in a debate – the **team method** and the **individual method**.

1.5.1 Team method

The team method means all members of the team:

- Fully understand the definition or meaning of the topic,
- Have a common way of how they are going to speak about it in order to avoid any contradiction of fact or view points within the team
- Fully understand what their team line is, that is, understanding their focus line of argument as a team

1.5.2 Individual method

As an individual member of your team, you must:

- Have a clear idea of your own arguments
- Have a clear idea of which examples you will be using to support your arguments.
- Master **sign posting**, that is, be able to make a clear division between one argument and the other, in order to enable the audience to know when you are moving from one argument to the next. You can use connecting devices like, first, second, next, number one, number two, to begin, to add, to end, to conclude etc
- Make you sure that, when you are presenting one particular argument, it should be logical, that is, one point is based on, or comes from the preceding point and leads you naturally to the next point.
- Organize your rebuttal in a logical way. To make your rebuttal logical, you have to attack each argument that your opponents present in turn. Take on one point, demolish it and move to the next, clear it to the dust bin and move on point by point until you completely finish with all the points as nonsense.
- Organize your speech well within the allocated time frame. Do not waffle just to fill in time. Do not spend too much time on one point and then have to rush through all

your other points just because you want to finish your speech in time. To avoid this, you should structure your speech well.

1.6. Manner

As we have seen so far, **matter** is what you say in a debate, while **method** is how you **organize** what you say. **Manner** is how you present what you say. There is no one prescribed way of presenting your argument. The best advice is to develop a manner style that is natural to you such as your voice, body movements and facial expressions and looks.

CHAPTER TWO

DEBATE TOPICS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The choice of topic, the processing of the topic into a debate topic and a clear definition of the role of each actor in a debate session, are important preliminary actions to a debate session.

2.0 Defining the topic

The first thing to do after selecting a topic is to make sure everybody understands the topic. The vocabulary or words that make up the topic should be explained for all members of the team to understand. We should bring the meaning to the simplest form possible by asking this question: if this topic were presented to the average people on the street - is this what they would take this topic to mean? Deciding and explaining what a topic means is called **defining the topic**

2.1 What kind of topic for a debate?

Before engaging in a debate session, there are questions we need to ask and provide answers to, so as to make the best out of it. What should we look out for when choosing a debate topic for secondary school students? The general recommendation is that:

- The topic should be drawn from the familiar physical, cognitive and psychological environments of the students. This means, the topic should for example be appropriate to their age bracket, education level and areas of specific interests to the students such current issues of public importance etc.
- Topics should be those that students can readily draw lessons from them for their practical use and application, such as jobs and joblessness, choosing a career, passing examinations, education, girls and boys, parents, teachers, human rights, morality, citizenship, girl child issues etc)

2.1.2 Processing the topic into a debate topic

Not just any topic can be a debate topic. After choosing the topic, we need to transform it from a mere topic into a **resolution**. A resolution is a statement which expresses a point of view which enables others to express a contrary view. It is a statement or proposed course of action that one team will argue for and another will argue against.

A topic like “School books” can be a topic for discussion – a round table or panel discussion – but not a debate topic.

Example: The topic “school books” becomes a debate topic when it is framed as follows: *“Government should provide text books for free for primary school children in rural Cameroon”*. It provides for one party to argue for, (pro) and another party can stand against (con). Other interesting examples: *“Boys and girls should study in separate schools”*, *“Young Cameroonians below 25 years should not be elected into parliament”*.

2.2 Actors in the debate

Several people or groups of people carry out different tasks for the debate session to be organized successfully. Who does what, in a debate session?

2.2.1 Debaters

There are always two sides to a debate, the **Affirmative and Negative teams or sides**. The team (or side) that agrees with the topic is called the AFFIRMATIVE (that is, “why the topic is true”) and the team that disagrees with the topic is called the NEGATIVE, (that is, “why the topic is false”). Generally, the teams engaged in a debate mutually refer to each other as “our opponents”, or as being “on the other side”.

2.2.2 Speaker

The speaker is the member of the team at the time he or she is up speaking during a debate session.

2.2.3 Moderator

The moderator guides and directs the flow of the debate. He/she indicates who in each team has to speak, in what order, and ensures that, what is said is not out of the resolution of the debate. Generally, the moderator should be someone who is eloquent, lively, and knowledgeable in the topic under debate. This can be a teacher, a senior student or any person who commands some degree of authority and respect.

2.2.4 Time keeper

The time keeper ensures that, each speaker respects the time allocated. The time keeper is expected to alert the moderator to indicate time over for the speaker. The time keeper should not address the speaker directly. Scrupulous respect of time is one of those things that make a debate challenging and exciting.

2.2.5 Team of judges

Generally, there is a team of three to four people who play the role of judges in a debate session. During the debate, the *judges* assess and decide which side presented a stronger case. They generally their criteria on such aspects as mastery of subject matter, language proficiency, art of public speaking, logical organization and flow of ideas, quantity and appropriateness of facts advanced and respect for opponents or degree of civility. The team of judges in the end declares the winner of the debate.

2.2.6 The audience

The audience plays an important role in the unfolding of the debate. The presence of a crowd in the hall where the debate is taking place may intimidate some speakers. Students who are not bold enough may lose trend of ideas, or stumble in their argument as well as make errors in language. On the other hand, the presence of the crowd could just create opposite effects in some cases. Being in front of the crowd can inspire other speakers to want to impress the people listening and watching. This can lead them to become bold, speak well and demonstrate impressive degree of knowledge in the subject matter.

CHAPTER THREE

HOW TO PREPARE FOR A DEBATE AND HOW A DEBATE SESSION UNFOLDS

The moderator and debaters are frontline actors in a debate session. Consequently, they are expected to prepare very well intellectually and materially.

3.0 Intellectual preparation for debaters

- Students should be given time to carry out thorough research on their topic before engaging in the debate as this will enable them master all aspects of the topic.
- Students should rehearse their performance several times and days ahead of the debate session
- Set transparent written guidelines in advance, allowing both parties to understand and accept the debate rules. Debaters can become belligerent if they feel the rules are unfair, so it's very important that both sides know what to expect.
- Make sure all the students in the teams understand any specialized vocabulary that could be used during the debate
- Each team should be encouraged to form a strategy as to who will do most of the talking during the debate
- The timekeeper should signal the moderator **rather than directly addressing individual debaters**
- Students debating should be made to understand in advance that, they need to be cordial, addressing only opposing ideas and never insulting the individual.
- The debate should be carried out in a spirit of making the issues raised be useful to people and the society as a whole.

3.1 Intellectual preparation for the moderator

- The moderator should conduct the debate itself without prejudice and with fairness in mind making sure one speaker is not at a technical **disadvantage**.

- The moderator should conduct the debate with general politeness and decency in mind even if some debaters may at one point go off track or flare up for one reason or the other.

3.2. Material preparations for the debate

- The hall in which the debate takes place should be spacious enough to contain the debate teams, debate session managers, and the student audience.
- Ensure that, the audio or sound equipment are in good functional state to avert any breaks in sound
- Make sure each speaker's podium is visible from the crowd
- It's preferable for students to be seated not standing in the hall

3.2.1 Sitting positions

- The chairperson or moderator and the debaters are seated at the front of the class
- The team in favor of the resolution sits to the right of the moderator
- The team in opposition to the resolution sits to the left of the chairperson.
- The timekeeper sits with the class and indicates when the time limit has been reached.

3.3. How the debate unfolds

- The moderator **states the resolution** that is to be debated,
- The moderator introduces the First Speaker from the team in support of the resolution and gives him/her a time limit to present their case.
- The moderator introduces the **First Speaker** of the team against the resolution and gives him/her a time limit to present their case.

This procedure of presenting speakers for and against the motion/resolution or topic alternately is continued until each debater has given his/her argument. A debate session thus unfolds in a strict laid down order. In practice it goes as follows:

3.3.1 First speaker of the Affirmative is expected to:

- When you stand up to speak, should thank the opponents first, then the moderator, time keeper and audience. (Some people think that, you don't thank the team of judges, for this could be considered an attempt to influence them)
- You define the topic.
- Present the Affirmative's (your) team's line.
- Outline briefly what each speaker in your team will talk about.
- Present the first half of your case.

3.3.2 First speaker of the Negative is expected to:

- Accept or reject the definition. (If you don't do this it is assumed that you accept the definition).
- Present the Negative's (your) team line.
- Outline briefly what each member of your team will say.
- Rebut, that is, deny, criticize, and weaken the main points presented by the First Speaker for the Affirmative.
- Present the first half of your team's case.

3.3.2 Second speaker of the Affirmative must:

- Reaffirm the Affirmative's (your) team line, that is, restate why your case should be considered as the proper, true or correct one.
- Rebut, that is, deny, criticize and weaken the main points presented by the First speaker for the opposing side.
- Present the second half of the Affirmative's (your) case.

3.3.3 Second speaker for the Negative must:

- Reaffirm the Negative's team line, that is, restate why your case should be considered as the proper, true or correct one.

- Rebut that is, deny, criticize and weaken the main points presented by your opponents.
- Present the second half of the Negative's case.

3.3.4 Third speaker for the Affirmative must:

- Reaffirm the Affirmative's (your) team line, that is, restate why your case should be considered as the proper, true or correct one.
- Rebut, deny, criticize and weaken all the remaining points of the case of your opponents.
- Present a summary of your case.
- Round off the debate for your team.

3.3.5 The third speaker for the Negative must:

- Reaffirm your team line.
- Rebut, deny, criticize and weaken all the remaining points remaining of the case of your opponents.
- Present a summary of your case.
- Round off the debate for your team.

3.4 Judging the teams

Usually in a debate, the *winner* is the one who has presented the strongest case. You can determine the winners in two ways:

3.5 Audience as participant and judge

One way of determining the winner is this: Get the audience vote on which team they thought made the most convincing *argument*. The audience should be given an opportunity to evaluate the debate and the performance of the debate teams. This can be done by informally polling members of the audience to determine how many agree with the team in support of the resolution and how many agree with the team in opposition.

This can be done by a raise of hands or pulling on a counting machine which proclaims the winner.

3.6 Role of Judges

Generally, a team of judges determine the winner of a debate. The grading criteria could include ability to communicate clearly, mastery of language, relevance of points advanced etc. Marks are allocated for each criterion and tallied. The team that obtains higher marks wins the debate.

3.7 No-winner or all-winner option

We agree that, in a debate, the winner is the one who has presented the strongest case. But, we can adopt the no-winner or the all-winner option. This will mean that, it is the debate itself that has won and not any of the two teams. In this option we consider that, the overall purpose of speaking in the debate is more important than the specific result of the debate, that is, which team has won and which team has not won. What is more important according to this option is the fact of having identified an issue and examined it from both the positive and negative perspectives. As long as the students were able to communicate clearly, use language correctly by respecting rules of grammar, good pronunciation, were fluent and logical in their arguments, the debate could be considered as success. So far as issues raised can help solve a problem or challenge in society, we could consider the debate as successful.

Furthermore, the no-winner or all-winner option requires we ask people in the audience to explain whether or not their own positions were strengthened or changed as result of hearing the debate. The audience can also make their statements which they feel could have been used as effective arguments by the debaters. The overall purpose of this option means that, speaking is more important than the specific victory of any of the two teams. It is the victory of the debate that matters.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHAT TO DO, AND WHAT NOT TO DO IN A DEBATE SESSION

There are a number of things that debaters as individuals or teams should not do and should do. Some dos and don'ts of a typical debate include the following:

4.1 Eye contact for the speaker

- Don't look above the heads of the people in the audience. If you look above their heads they will lose concentration very quickly.
- Look straight into their eyes to hold their attention
- Do not spend your time reading from notes or jotters or any written text. Debating is an exercise in lively interaction between two teams and between the teams and the audience, not in reading a speech.

4.2 Voice of the speaker

There are many things you can do with your voice to make it effective in a debate.

- Speak loud enough so that you can be heard.
- But do not shout all the time for continuous shouting will become very annoying to the audience.
- Use volume and pitch to emphasize important points in your speech.
- A sudden loud burst will grab your audience's attention while a period of quiet speaking can draw your audience in and make them listen carefully.

4.3 Body

Your body is a tool which you can use to communicate and influence the audience and your judges

- Make hand gestures deliberately and with confidence

- Move your head and upper body to maintain eye contact with all members of the audience
- Stand still and with confidence, or if you have to walk up and down, walk with confidence.
- Don't let your body apologize for your presence by appearing nervous.

4.4 Your look and looks of the speaker

Your appearance matter almost as much as your delivery and your content.

- Dress appropriately
- Appear calm and collected, prepared and confident. This is vital in debate. .
- Avoid nervous habits such as scratching your head, fidgeting with your notes, gazing into the air etc. All this only help to distract your presentation from the audience
- Don't let any one thing detract you from your ability to persuade the audience.

4.5 Use of big words

- Use familiar and easy-to-understand words
- Debating is not about big words
- Do not be too informal but don't be too pedantic or academic either
- There are no marks to be gained from trying to use big words
- Do not let someone else write your presentation. If you get somebody else write your presentation, you get into the debate without the spirit or skills of debating and end up looking really silly and sometimes getting stuck on simplest of words

4.6 More useful tips

- When the moderator invites you to speak, you should be ready immediately.
- As you take to the floor to speak, start by thanking the team that is opposing your own team first, then, you thank the moderator, timekeeper and audience.
- Never argue with the moderator or member of the team of judges.

- Stop when the bell rings for time over: the bell rings a minute before the time limit, a double bell on the time limit, and a third ring at thirty seconds over.
- You do not even have to agree with your argument, you just must commit to it in order to create a strong debate.
- Be ready to concede small points. It does not matter if you lose many little battles, so long as you win the war.

Remember, in a debate self-confidence should be radiating in all that you say and do.

4.7 Language of democratic debaters

A debate session should be a forum for an expression of mutual respect. We need to respect our opponent even when we disagree with their points. We can attack ideas and not those who express such ideas. This is why some particular expressions are usually used in a debate session at certain levels of the session. The expressions below have been drawn from several internet sources (websites) including “*Debate and Discussion*” by David Moser, (at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/17655885/>). We have edited and contextualized the material to fit the main expected users who are the students. Using the expressions during can help develop democratic practices and culture at the individual level and at the level of the community.

4.8 When talking about the opponent

- The other side will have to explain why.... otherwise we win that point.
- We said that... but the other side has not replied to our point.
- I'd like to focus on two points that the other side has failed to address.
- There are two points that we have succeeded in establishing...
- I want to call your attention to an important point that our opponents have not addressed yet.
- I'd like to point out that there are two issues our opponents have failed to dispute, namely...
- I must stress again that our point has not been refuted by the other side.

- Our opponents have still not addressed the question we raised a moment ago...
- The other side has failed to answer our point about...
- Notice that the affirmative side has not addressed our main point.

4.9 Making a point for one's team

- The first point I would like to raise is this...
- Our position is the following...
- Here's the main point I want to raise...
- I'd like to deal with two points here. The first is...
- A moment ago, I raised the point on... Now I would like to add that.....
- Let me just restate my position.
- Just to be clear, I would like to restate that.....

4.10 Concluding an argument for the team

- To sum up, here are the main points our opponents have not addressed...
- We pointed out that...
- Our opponents have claimed that...
- To recap the main points...
- Let's sum up where we stand in this debate
- Let me summarize our position in this debate
- In summary, we want to point out that...
- Let's see which arguments are still standing.
- Let's take stock of where we are in this debate.
- This leads me to conclude that...
- And that's why in summary, I believe that...
- In a word.....
- My position is this.....

4.11 What NOT to do, (Protecting country and democracy)

The fact that a debate offers an excellent forum for freedom of expression does not give us the license to say anything, and to say everything anyhow. In a debate, certain things should NOT be talked about so as to protect the country and democracy.

The don'ts of a debate include the following:

Hate speech:

- Do not speak or act with the intention or in a way as to hurt your opponent on the basis of the tribe (ethnic hatred), religion and culture.

Speech that incites people to violence

- Do not use "fighting words" or the kind of language that can provoke public violence and thus disrupt public peace or "public order".

Revealing state secrets or classified information

- Do not pick pieces of examples or evidence from state secrets or classified information such as disclosing number of soldiers, types and quantities of your country has etc.

Blasphemy/Profanity

- Do not use speech that shows a lack of respect for a religion, God, or holy things.

Obscenity/pornography

- Avoid using language connected with sex in a way that is offensive to people,

SOME TOPICS FOR DEBATE for students

- Breakfast is the most important meal of the day
- Girls and boys should not study in the same school
- Teachers should earn a higher salary than policemen
- Sex education should be introduced as a subject in secondary schools
- Television is a bad influence
- Cellular phones should be allowed in schools.
- Schools should be year-round
- Parents should be punished for their children's mistakes

Useful links and References

PDF File Useful Debate Vocabulary

www.scribd.com/doc/.../Useful-Debate-Vocabulary (16 oct. 2012)

www.slideshare.net/.../useful-debate-vocabulary-1659...

Debate Terms and Vocabulary, Normalesup.org (18 Feb. 2013)

www.normalesup.org/.../debate_terms_vocab.pdf

debate - Dictionary Definition : Vocabulary.com

<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/debate>

Debate Vocabulary - linguaix

linguaix.pbworks.com/f/Debate+Vocabulary.doc

[Debates, discussion & speaking activity lessons for teachers ...](#)

www.eslflow.com/debateanddiscussionlessons.html

Topics for Debate in English | EnglishClub

www.englishclub.com › ...

ENGLISH DEBATE - YouTube

www.youtube.com/watch?v=x00GnOVp4RQ (24 janv. 2013)

Debate Ideas for Use in American English

www.paulnoll.com/...English/English-debate.htm

The First Steps to Debate in English

Guardian Weekly Global English debate | Guardian The Guardian

www.theguardian.com/...English/0,8458,400340,00...

Debate - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debate