

Classroom Lincoln-Douglas Debate

Grade Levels: **8 - 12**

From Teacher Vision

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Objectives

- Students will use their research skills.
- Students will understand a position well enough to be able to respond to arguments against it.
- Students will understand the Lincoln-Douglas style of debate.

Materials

- Student handout outlining the procedures of a Lincoln-Douglas debate
- References about topic being covered

Internet Resources

- Issues outlined by Public Agenda
<http://publicagenda.org/issues/issuehome.cfm>
- Egg timer
- Assessment outline (attached)

Procedures

1. Choose debate topic.
2. Assign teams; distribute Student handout.
3. Discuss the procedures of the debate. Allow students to review the attached Assessment outline.
4. Students research their positions. Allow groups to brainstorm about the position and devise arguments.
5. Require each group to turn in a position paper, which outlines the three to five points that support their position. These papers must have a bibliography. Also, ask them to identify holes in their arguments, where the other group will attack.
6. Perform the Debate!

Lincoln-Douglas Style Debate Procedure
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A. This style of debate has two sides. The side that favors the proposition is called the **Affirmative position**, and the side that opposes the proposition is called the **Negative position**. This style is very reliant on time and good decorum.

B. You will need to fill the following jobs with members of your team. Everyone on your team must have at least one job.

Affirmative Position	Negative Position
Moderator-Announces the debate and calls debate to order. Name:	Timekeeper-Keeps speakers within time constraints. Name:
Lead Debater-Presents the overall argument of the Affirmative position. Name:	Lead Debater-Presents the overall argument of the Negative position. Name:
Question Asker-Asks the Negative position team questions about its argument. Name:	Question Asker-Asks the Affirmative position team questions about its argument. Name:
Question Answerer-Must be able to answer questions about team's position. Name:	Question Answerer-Must be able to answer questions about team's position. Name:
Rebutter-Responds to the arguments raised by the questions. Name:	Rebutter-Responds to the arguments raised by the questions. Name:
Closer-Sums up Affirmative position, referring to new issues raised in the debate. Name:	Closer-Sums up Negative position, referring to new issues raised in the debate. Name:

C. Read through the following procedures so that you are very clear about what is expected of you.

Step by Step Procedures:

1. Moderator announces proposition to be debated.
For example: "The death penalty is wrong, and should not be allowed in the U.S."
2. The Moderator must introduce each speaker after the Timekeeper calls time.
3. The Timekeeper must now keep track of the time, letting participants know when they have one minute left to speak and when their time is up.

4. 5 Minutes: Lead Debater for the Affirmative position presents position.
5. 3 Minutes: Question Asker from the Negative position team asks questions of Question Answerer from the Affirmative position team.
6. 5 Minutes: Lead Debater for the Negative position presents argument.
7. 3 minutes: Question Asker from the Affirmative position team asks questions of Question Answerer from the Negative position team.
8. 3 Minutes: Affirmative Rebutter responds to the arguments raised by the questions.
9. 3 Minutes: Negative Rebutter responds to the arguments raised by the questions.
10. 5 Minutes: Affirmative Closer sums up position, referring to new issues raised in the debate.
11. 5 Minutes: Negative Closer sums up position, referring to new issues raised in the debate.

Lincoln-Douglas Style Debate Assessment

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Members of the team:

Editor of Position Paper:

Moderator/Timekeeper:

Lead Debater:

Question Asker:

Question Answerer:

Rebutter:

Closer:

Others:

Position Paper:

Were the arguments supported and sourced?

Did the introduction present the argument well and the conclusion wrap up the argument well?

Were the arguments logical and reasonable?

Debate

Overall presentation of argument:

Ability to respond to the challenges of the opposition:

Eye contact, voice volume, poise:

Logical and cogent responses:

Ability to work as a group:

[<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/us-civil-war/lesson-plan/2544.html>]