



21ST CENTURY DEBATE

A DEEPER LEARNING APPROACH TO DEBATE EDUCATION

21st Century Debate Institute – Great Pumpkin Debates

Welcome to the ***Great Pumpkin Debates***, which takes place on Saturday, October 29, 2022, from 5pm to 7pm, and/or 7pm to 9pm (U.S. Eastern Time). This will be a virtual event (using Zoom) for students in grades 4-8 (and grade 3 with permission).

This event is meant to be a fun experience for students and an excellent volunteer opportunity for the older and more experienced students as well. All are welcome and this “seasonal” event is open to everyone and free to attend. There will be prizes for the top teams, speakers, and costumes (and possibly a crossfire event).

We at 21st Century Debate Institute believe that debate education is a powerful vehicle for delivering a deeper learning experience to our participants. It is our desire to provide a low-stress, fun, and meaningful learning opportunity for anyone participating in our programs and events.

Topic: **[Building a...] *High-speed rail across the U.S. is desirable.***

This event utilizes a modified version of Public Forum Debate. Each student presents an argument (speech), refutes an argument, and participates in a “grand crossfire,” which concludes the debate. A panel of judges with varying levels of experience will provide an oral assessment of the debaters’ performance. We employ an apprenticeship model for teaching by inviting older and more experienced students to help mentor and judge the younger, less experienced students. We invite adults to mentor, judge, and supervise.

“Thank you,” to those volunteering your time and energy to this worthy cause – we are deeply appreciative of your support, and we hope we can count on you to volunteer again. Being a judge requires no previous experience. All we ask is for you to be fair-minded in your decision making and for you to provide objective and honest feedback. It is the job of the debaters to convince you about their arguments and ideas, so please don’t feel as if you (the judge) need to do any prior research about debate or the topic. **IMPORTANT: Please stay off the phone and give the debaters your *undivided attention*.**

Tips of judging effectively:

1. Try to focus on the skills they are demonstrating for you. They present arguments, refute arguments, and ask/answer questions from the opposing team.
2. Be kind in your demeanor. Student can get nervous and when this happens it might affect their performance. Try using a reassuring tone and help keep things calm.
3. Work diligently to avoid bias. You may find yourself favoring certain facts or ideas not because of what the debaters are saying, but because of your own feelings or knowledge. Try to be as objective as possible.



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Guiding Principles of the Event:

Three Burdens in Debate: Proof, refutation, and rejoinder.

https://debate.uvm.edu/dcpdf/Gary_Rybold_Speaking_Listening_Understanding_2006.pdf (pp 12-14)

For a better understanding, please refer to Dr. Rybold's textbook. Here are my (Coach Bill) comments:

1. **Proof:** Students are expected to have researched their arguments and ideas. Please try not to be overly critical about how the student cites their sources. If a student is explaining ideas with how and why (using "because") and not just 'what' trains do, then that student should be credited with having met their proof burden.
2. **Rebuttal:** Students are expected to disagree with an argument made by their opponent. This should be well-organized, contain proof (as above), and be spoken with kindness and respect. ex. They said, we say, because, and therefore.
3. **Rejoinder:** At 21st Century Debate, we will add more formalized opportunities for rejoinders in the future. As for now, we ask that debaters seek to accomplish this through their questions and answers - particularly during the "grand crossfire".

Three Modes of Persuasion (Aristotle): Logos, Pathos, and Ethos.

<http://www.atlas101.ca/pm/concepts/logos-ethos-and-pathos/> (Rhetorical Appeals, Aristotle)

1. **Logos:** The speech is expected to last no more than 90 sec (2 min max). The student is providing an introduction, one argument, and a simple conclusion. Was the speech organized? Could you understand their explanations? Does the speech make sense? Please give positive encouragement about this.
2. **Pathos:** Students were asked to engage the listener by speaking in a convincing manner. Did the speaker look and sound like they were concerned about the topic? Did they have passion and/or enthusiasm in their speaking mannerisms?
3. **Ethos:** Students are expected to speak to you and not just read to you – there is a difference. Can you tell? Are they looking into the camera (or at least in its direction)? Did they speak with confidence (facial expressions, body posture, smooth gestures)? Did they use evidence from what sounded like a credible source? There are many things a speaker can do to gain credibility with you.

Making the Decision:

1. **Ranking the Speakers:** Each speaker is to be ranked relative to the others (1-4).
2. **Rating the Speakers:** Each speaker is given "speaker points" indicating how well they spoke and how well they debated. **(Please... no ties! ".5" = a tie breaker!).**
 - a. 29.5 to 30 = outstanding, nearly perfect!
 - b. 28.5 to 29 = excellent
 - c. 27.5 to 28 = above average
 - d. 26.0 to 27 = average (Please try not to give anyone a "below average" score.)
3. **Choosing the Winning Side:** How well did the debaters perform as a team? Please don't choose a side because you personally agree with it. Which team did the better debating? Trust yourself (no ties are allowed).

Please be kind, objective, and fair-minded! 😊



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The “Skills Debate” Format: Coin Flip for *Their Side* or *Speaking First/Second*.

1. **Arguments:** Each speaker presents one argument with some proof (up to 2 min). Process: A speaker from Team A, then Team B, back to A, ends with B.

Preparation for Rebuttal = 3-5 minutes (Both teams prep simultaneously).

2. **Rebuttals:** Each speaker refutes one argument using some proof (Up to 2 min). IMPORTANT: To earn full credit, the speakers must refute one of the arguments made by the opposing team and not read a randomized rebuttal. Prewritten rebuttals that match the subject (economy, environment, or community) are part of the preparation process. It is considered acceptable for both speakers from the same team to refute the same argument from the opposing team. Process: A speaker from Team A, then Team B, back to A, ends with B.

3. **Grand Crossfire:** Both teams argue in the grand crossfire style (3 min). For those not familiar with the crossfire style of debating, it is a back-and-forth style of arguing. They are matching their wits and research against their opponents. Try not to allow things to become aggressive during the crossfire – part of their score is based on how **kind & respectful** they are – please don’t reward overly assertive behavior... it is the role of the judge to keep things calm and civil.

Note: You can stop the timer, then advise them about their behavior, and with kindness, encourage them to be nicer to each other and resume the crossfire.

Note: You are fulfilling the role of the adult in the room – if you laugh and go along with snobbery, people cutting off their opponent in the middle of a point, or saying snide comments, then the debaters will take their cue from your attitude, and this may encourage them to become harsh or to attempt to assert dominance, which are not the traits of professionalism we are seeking to encourage in our students. **Judges unable or unwilling to fulfill this role will be removed from the event.**

VERY IMPORTANT: The timing must go smoothly. We cannot allow students to go over the allowed time. Speeches are 90 seconds with 30 seconds to wrap it up. I need you to ask them to end their speech at two minutes. Crossfire questions and answers are expected to be immediate and as such we should discourage debaters from overly explaining – I am relying on your judgment as to when someone is going on needlessly or sometimes, they just need extra words and time to complete their thoughts. Regardless of why you choose to intervene due to time limits, please be kind in the tone and manner of your interruption. ex. “Thank you, speaker – I believe you have made your point. I realize you have more to say, but we really need to move on. Thank you!” The rebuttals need to be timed as well. They must not share more than two facts – if they try mentioning every idea they have researched, then the speeches will go way over the time limit (same as speeches = 90 sec of rebuttal and 30 sec of grace*).

One last thing... try keeping your feedback brief but detailed enough to show that you were interested and please be positive (use your best judgment).