

Debate Curriculum

Prepared by Stephen McCarthy (smccarthy@idebate.org) for the International Debate Education Association's series of global debate and media workshops.

Introduction: the global media and debate workshops

This curriculum is designed to work as a part of IDEA's global series of debate and media workshops, which bring together students from across a region to learn about media and debate, to improve their advocacy or journalism, and to network with other engaged youth. These workshops aim to facilitate in the students:

- *Improved familiarity and experience with open-source media production software,*
- *A critical awareness of the role that the media plays in shaping social issues,*
- *A grounding in the basic skills of debate and experience in debates, and*
- *Practice and versatility in composition across media.*

Because the workshops encourage the integration of the students' skills, all trainers must work together to fulfill the objectives. So while this curriculum is aimed at developing debate skills and experience, debate trainers should work with trainers from other disciplines to encourage development of the other learning outcomes. One way to integrate this in debate is by considering media-related resolutions.

Debate Segment

This curriculum is the template for the debate portion of the two-week workshop. It emphasizes basic skills of argumentation, public speaking and case-building rather than strategy in a specific format. Participants are not expected to have prior debate experience.

The debate segment includes:

- nine mandatory lessons, each intended to be 100 min long,
- eight optional half-lesson components, each intended to be 50 min long,
- practice debates to be organized and critiqued by the trainers, and
- a mini-tournament to be organized and judged by the trainers.

The practice debates and mini-tournament should be organized in a manner suitable for each workshop, but we recommend having all students debate as much as possible, mixing up the teams often, and using a predominantly media-related resolutions.

Schedule

(Note: instructional days do not count days off due to media visits, cultural trips or project work.)

Instructional Day	Morning	Afternoon
1	Introduction to debate	Basic argumentation
2	Refutation	Effective speaking
3	3v3 Format I	3v3 Format II (radio debates)
4	Basic content for media debates	Proposition cases
5	Opposition cases	Practice debate
6	2 optional components	Practice debate
7	2 optional components	Practice debate
8	2 optional components	Practice debate
9	Mini-tournament	
10	Final day of classes – show debate	

This is a suggested schedule, and trainers may modify it to fit with the demands of their particular workshop, or their personal training preferences. In particular, trainers may wish to modify the number of practice debates or optional components to accommodate their students' pace of learning.

Notes to trainers

Here are our top four tips to help you teach this curriculum successfully:

1. **Make it your own:** don't hesitate to make on-the-fly modifications where you see fit. The suggested order, timing or method of presentation may not work for you, so improve on it!
2. **Prepare your classes in advance:** Each lesson has a section outlining what you must do to prepare in advance, but you should always read the lesson beforehand.
3. **Have regular team meetings:** You will likely be working with several debate trainers, and it is essential to keep good communication among team members.
4. **Don't ramble on too much:** You're a debater, so of course you like to speak. This curriculum is designed with plenty of activities, so make sure you leave time for them.

Mandatory Lessons (100 min each)

Title	Subsections	Activities	Learning Objectives
1. Introduction to debate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introductions - What is debate? - Activity (Expectations) - Debate topics - Course Overview - Activity (5 Qs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expectations, fears and goals - 5 Questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand and articulate what debate is. - To know the general structure of the debate curriculum. - To better know their debate classmates and be able to work together with everyone in the class.
2. Basic argumentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intro to C-R-E - Using reasoning - Using evidence - Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Editorial content analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To know the structure of a C-R-E argument - To be able to identify complete and incomplete arguments in media. - To be able to construct a complete argument.
3. Refutation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four-step refutation - Activity (volleyball) - Good and bad refutation - Activity (practice) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refutation volleyball - Practice refutation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand the four-step process of refutation. - To be able to refute C-R-E arguments.
4. Effective Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective speaking characteristics - Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Just a minute - Side-coached speeches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand the characteristics of an effective speaker. - To build confidence to be able to speak in front of a group. - To be able to speak effectively.
5. 3v3 Format I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formal vs informal debate - 3v3 style basics - Speaker roles - POIs - Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parachute debate (for fun) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand different types of debates including informal and formal debates. - To know the basic 3v3 format and speaker roles. - To know how to give a Point of Information.
6. 3v3 Format II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note-taking basics - Radio debate prep - Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Radio debates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand how to flow a debate. - To experience the 3v3 format in a radio debate. - To build confidence in debating.
7. Basic content for media debates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity - Basic principles - Application examples 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Snowball discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand and be able to articulate the basic principles underlying most media-related debates. - To be able to apply these principles to a variety of media-related resolutions.
8. Proposition cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Argumentation review - Intro to cases - Models/definitions - Types of proposition case - Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case-building in jigsaw groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand the meaning of case and how it relates to argument and resolution - To know the types of proposition cases and be able to recognize the type of a resolution - To be able to construct a complete proposition case
9. Opposition cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intro to opposition cases - Types of opposition case - Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opposition case exercise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand the role of the opposition team in a debate - To know the types of opposition case and be able to choose the correct type from a presented proposition case - To be able to construct a complete opposition case

Optional Components (50 min each)

Title	Subsections	Activity	Learning Objectives
Debate debrief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trainer comments - Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whole-class discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To improve certain debate skills after a recently-completed practice debate.
Debate and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity (values) - Using debate to strengthen advocacy - Activity (case-building) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Value continuum - Case-building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand and be able to articulate one's own views on media-related issues - To be able to transfer debate skills to an advocacy setting
Speech Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basics of organization - Organizing a debate speech - Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reorganizing a speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To be able to effectively organize a speech - To know strategies for remaining organized in a debate
Points of Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review: POI basics - Making strong POIs - Responding to POIs - Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rapid-fire POI practice in trainer speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand the function and format of a Point of Information - To be able to distinguish strong from weak POIs - To be able to give and receive POIs in a debate
Rebuttal speeches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review: role of the rebuttal speaker - Making an effective rebuttal speech - Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rebuttal speech practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand the role of a rebuttal speaker - To be able to make a rebuttal speech
Actor analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are actors? - Actor analysis - Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TV Talk show w/ actors represented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand and be able to articulate the meaning of actor in a debate context - To be able to find the main actors relating to an issue and analyse the issue from their point of view.
Logical reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Standards of reasoning - Examples of fallacies - Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spot the fallacy improv game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand logical reasoning and logical fallacies. - To be able to spot and label certain fallacies in media.
Content deep dive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity - Issues and evidence relating to the resolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shifting groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To understand the issues and arguments related to particular media-related resolutions.

Possible media-related resolutions

This is a list of media-related resolutions trainers can use in examples, activities and debates. Of course, it is not comprehensive and trainers are encouraged to find other resolutions. In Lesson 1 there is time for students to brainstorm resolutions which can be added to this list.

Media types:

- *The age of print media should end.*
- *Blogging can be a serious form of journalism.*

Media ownership:

- *Political entities should not own media corporations.*
- *The state should not operate a media corporation.*
- *Yellow journalism has a place in public discourse.*
- *Disallow entities from owning more than a certain share of media within a region.*

War/conflict:

- *Embedded journalism should be disallowed.*
- *The media should show the full horrors of war.*
- *Media should cooperate with government propaganda in times of war.*

Freedom of information/hacking

- *Breaking journalistic ethics for the purposes of revealing injustice is legitimate.*
- *Hacking for the purpose of revealing injustice is legitimate.*
- *Media has the obligation to pursue and publish government secrets.*

Censorship:

- *Censorship of media does more harm than good.*
- *Censor bloggers (take down websites?) who publish false information.*
- *Censor bloggers (take down websites?) who publish hate speech.*
- *Governments should not censor any media.*

Journalism and the law

- *Journalists should have to reveal their sources in court.*

Role of journalists in politics

- *Media should respect politicians' private lives.*
- *Media outlets should not restrict their employees' public expressions outside of work.*