



St Leonard's College

Debating

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION AND TRAINING SESSION 1:

The Basics: Speaker Roles; Debate
Structure; Manner/Matter/Method

A Quick 'Administrative' Quiz...

	Statement	True	False
1	Debates take place at St Leonard's College.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2	You should meet with your team and coach in the lead-up to the debate to prepare	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Schools are fined and risk expulsion from the competition if their teams forfeit (i.e. when a team doesn't turn up for their debate).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	When speaking, you should remain behind your desk, ideally while facing the opposition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
5	If you are unexpectedly unable to attend you should email Ms Esler as late as possible, ideally 10 minutes before the debate starts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6	You should arrange a time and place to meet with your team prior to the debate starting, and use this time for final preparations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	The school will provide transport for you to and from the debate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
8	You can access information relating to draws, times and topics at www.dav.com.au	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Debating has a useful STL Link page at http://learn.stleonards.vic.edu.au/debating/	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	You are responsible for ensuring that you have at least three people in your team available for each debate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Dates

The dates for the 2020 Schools Competition are:

Round 1: Wednesday, 11 March

Round 2: Wednesday, 29 April

Round 3: Wednesday, 27 May

Round 4: Wednesday, 17 June

Round 5: Wednesday, 22 July

- If you know of any clashes, please let me know as soon as possible!



Coaches

- Coaches will be finalised (fingers crossed!) within the next week
- You will be notified via email of your team's coach
- Your coach is your guide through each individual debate and assistant in preparing for the topic at hand – BUT, the ultimate responsibility for your preparation lies with you and your team members
- Your coach should be included in all email communication between members of your team
- Your coach is your ***first*** port of call for any issues or concerns – your second is me
 - Kate.Esler@stleonards.vic.edu.au
 - Year 8 Mentors' Office



Training and Resources

WHAT

- Topic-focused training (eg. D-Grade Topic 1!)
- Skills based focused training (eg. Rebuttal)
- Team preparation and feedback
- Peer Mentoring

HOW

Online (eg. screencast video)

Larger DAV groups – eg. All D-Grade

Individual team – eg. Preparation session with your coach

**Stay tuned to your
email, so you don't
miss out on
opportunities!**



Read the online handbook!



- [The Basics](#)
- [Scoring](#)
- [Speaker Roles](#)
- [Manner](#)
- [Matter](#)
- [Method](#)
- [Definitions](#)
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- [Rebuttal](#)
- [Secret and Advised Topics](#)
- [First Principles](#)
- [Planning Document](#)

<http://learn.stleonards.vic.edu.au/debating/>

Debates take place at Brighton Grammar School



Questions?



St Leonard's College

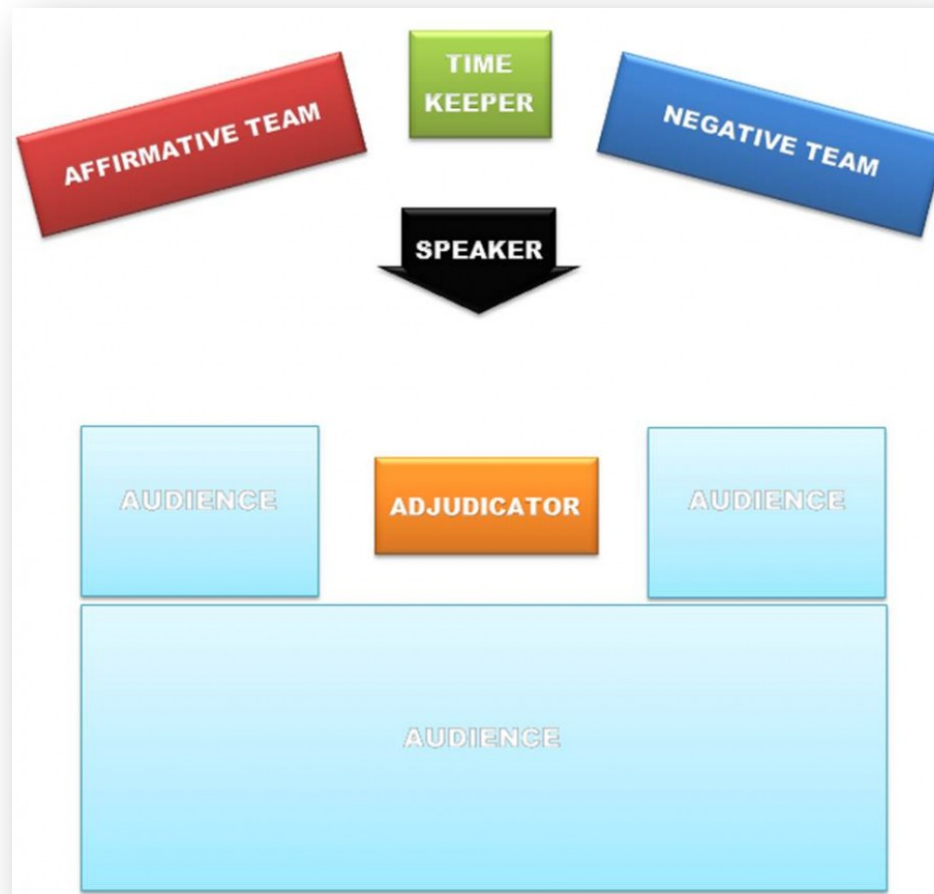
The basics



Format of a Debate

1. Chairperson welcomes the debaters and audience and introduces the topic.
2. Each speaker gives their presentation (introduced by the chairperson in turn).
3. While each speaker gives their presentation:
 - The members of the other team try to think of rebuttals (written on paper and passed to next speaker on their team). You cannot interrupt another speaker's speech.
 - The adjudicator listens to the debate and records comments and scores for each speaker.
4. Adjudicator tallies the scores.
5. Adjudicator makes comments to the audience and teams about each speaker and reveals who has won the debate.

Room Layout





First Speaker (Affirmative)

- Opens the debate
- Gives the team line
- Offers a definition of their understanding of the terms of the topic
- Explains the team split (outlines what they are going to cover and what the second team member will cover)
- Argues a case – about 2 to 3 main arguments (as they do this the negative team will be making rebuttal notes). These should be the most important/strongest arguments for your team.
- Summarizes arguments



First Speaker (Negative)

- Opens the negative team's side of the debate
- Gives the team line
- States team's view of the definition, resolves any issues
- Rebutts opponents arguments (other team makes notes for further rebuttal) – one quarter of speech
- Explains the team split (what they intend to cover and what 2nd speaker will cover)
- Argues a case – about 2 to 3 arguments (as they do the affirmative team will be making notes). These should be the most important/strongest arguments for your team.
- Summarizes arguments



Second Speaker

- Addresses the chairperson, fellow debaters and audience
- Rebutts main arguments of their opponent (other team makes notes for rebuttal) – approximately one third of speech
- Reminds audience of what first speaker covered and what they are going to cover
- Argues a case – about 3 arguments (other team makes notes for rebuttal)
- Summarises arguments



Third Speaker

- Addresses chairperson, fellow debaters and audience
- Rebutts opponents' arguments – about 6-8 rebuttals (other team makes notes for rebuttal) – three quarters of speech
- Summarizes the arguments of the first and second speaker
- Concludes with the team line



How long do I speak for?

A Grade: between 6 and 8 minutes.

B Grade: between 6 and 8 minutes.

C Grade: between 5 and 6 minutes.

D Grade: between 4 and 5 minutes.



Manner

- ‘How you speak’, or your delivery
- It is about how effective your delivery is and the impact your presentation has on the audience.
- It will include anything that enhances your presentation and makes it more engaging: the tone and volume of your voice, how quickly you speak, hand gestures, eye contact, your stance, and how you use your notes.



Manner: Quick Tips

- Always make eye contact with your audience in order to avoid merely reading your speech.
- Vary the tone and volume of your voice to add emphasis to your arguments.
- Use hand gestures and utilise the space afforded to you at the front of the room in a way that seems natural and appropriate in the context of your speech.
- Add pauses to allow your arguments to sink in, give you time to think and to help you avoid speaking too fast.
- Face the audience when you are giving your speech and direct everything to them (after all, they are the ones you want to convince!).
- Never face or address the opposition: they cannot be convinced to change their minds.



Matter

- ‘What you say’, or your content
- Matter is all about your material: your arguments, whether they are thought-out properly, the evidence you use to back them up, and your rebuttal.
- The most important factors that will influence your matter is the amount of research you do prior to the debate, and the degree to which you fully understand the arguments which you and your teammates are presenting.



Matter: Quick Tips

- Ensure that all of your arguments are relevant to the topic, and have been both explicitly and appropriately linked back to the topic during your speech.
- Always try to have at least one piece of evidence, example, quote or statistic to help support each of your arguments.
- Remember that your rebuttal will contribute towards your manner mark (for every speaker except for the first affirmative).
- Thorough research is a necessity in prepared debates: it will always be more difficult to rebut a team whose arguments have been carefully prepared and are backed up with thorough evidence.
- Constructing arguments that are based on first principles is an excellent way to improve the quality of your matter, particularly in secret topic debates.



Method

- ‘Organising your speech’, or your structure
- The adjudicator will look at how effectively you have structured your speeches, both individually and as a team.
- This includes splitting up your material appropriately between speakers, team lines, a common understanding of the topic, ensuring your speech has an introduction, body and conclusion, signposting and your organization.



Method: Quick Tips

- Have a strong, clear and logical team split between your three speakers, ideally based around the different themes of your argument.
- Have a team line that is repeated by each speaker and which ties together everyone's speeches.
- Remember to 'signpost' your points so that it is obvious when you are moving between arguments.
- Speakers should conclude with a brief summary of their main points.
- Make sure that everyone on your team understands your team's definition and/or model, so that they can then make reference to it themselves and follow it closely.
- Understand the arguments that your teammates will be using so that you do not contradict each other.
- Keep to the time limit: pay attention to the knocks, wear a watch with a timer, and do not go over or under your allotted time. When you hear the second knock, just finish your sentence, restate your team line, and sit down quickly!



Scoring in a Debate

Manner: 40% (average = 30)

Matter: 40% (average = 30)

Method: 20% (average = 15)

Total individual speaker scores will be between 70 and 80, with an average score of 75.



Model vs Empirical Debates

This is an EMPIRICAL debate because you are arguing whether something is right/wrong (no alternative is implied)

- *Topic 1: That we place too much value on sport.*
- *Topic 2: That sport should be compulsory in all schools.*

This is a MODEL (or normative) debate because you have to change something: *HOW* would you make sport compulsory?



Hard Line vs Soft Line

Example: That euthanasia should be legalised.

Soft Line

- Euthanasia is restricted to incredibly sick people, who are very close to death and who have no hope of a cure
- Patients need the consent of multiple doctors and psychologists
- Only passive euthanasia will be allowed – e.g. denying food and/or medicine.

Moderate Line

- Euthanasia is allowed to the terminally ill, who have a very low standard of living and little-to-no hope for a cure
- Doctor and psychologist consent required
- Doctor-assisted euthanasia allowed

Hard Line

- Euthanasia is available to anyone diagnosed with a terminal or debilitating illness, whether physical or mental
- Medical consent is required.
- Doctor-assisted and self-administered euthanasia allowed

The Structure of an Argument

The IDEA is the most important part – it needs to be clear, relevant and logical.

IDEA

EVIDENCE is very good to have, but is less important. Evidence ILLUSTRATES your idea and ADDS WEIGHT to the likelihood of consequences, etc.

ANALYSIS

EVIDENCE

The ANALYSIS is essential. You **must** be able to explain the reasoning behind your idea, including its implications for the topic/your model.



The Structure of an Argument

Idea: People should eat a vegetarian diet because it results in a much healthier diet.



Analysis: A vegetarian diet will be high in fruits and vegetables, which in turn provides the body with many more vitamins and minerals and a much lower amount of fat than a meat-based diet, all of which help people live longer, healthier lives.



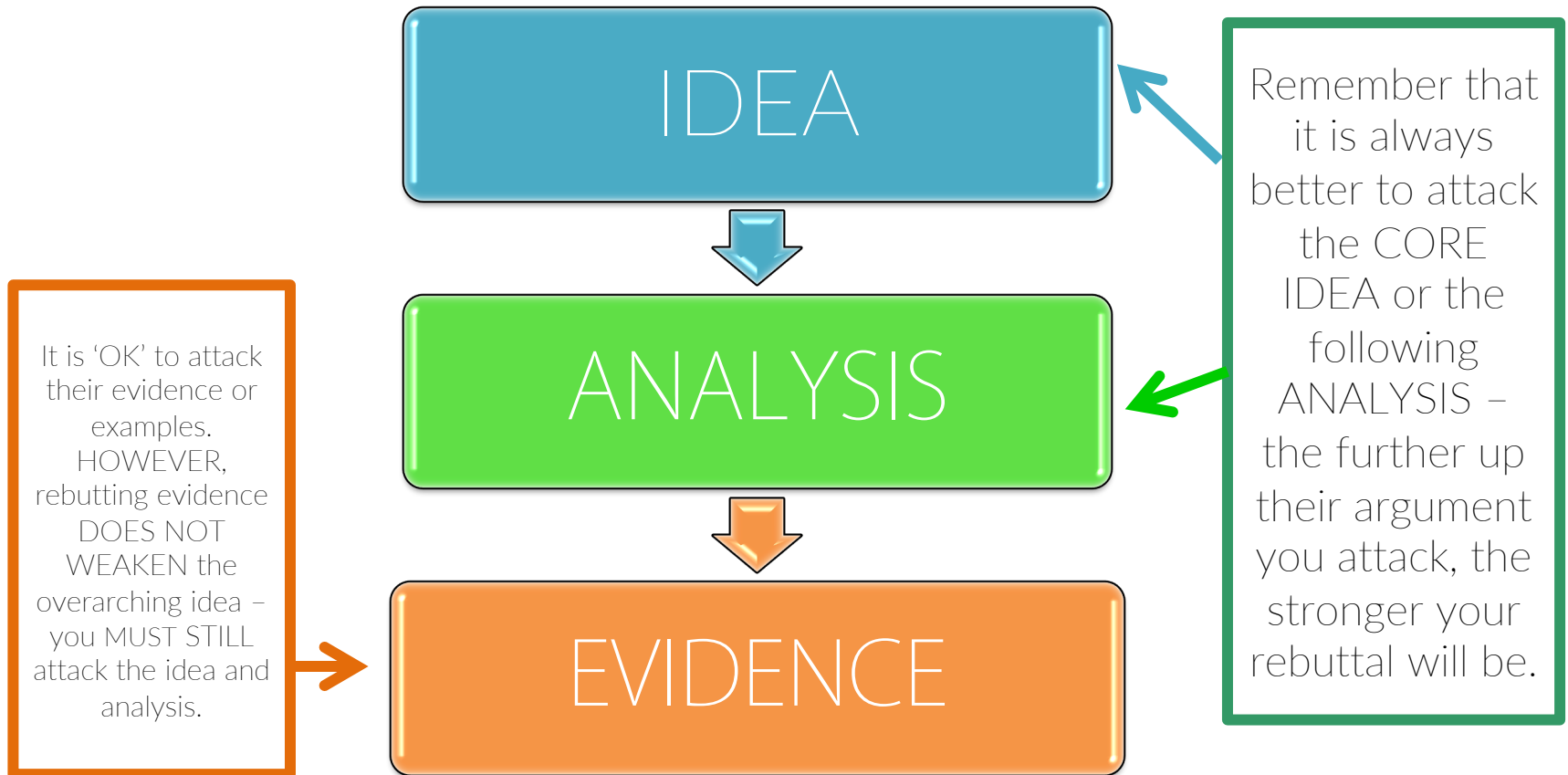
Evidence: For example, a recent British study found that a vegetarian diet resulted in a 25% decrease in heart disease, while a vegan diet saw a 57% lower incident of heart disease when compared with a meat-based diet.



Signposting

- Signposting is where you let the audience know what to expect in your speech, and when you identify when you are moving into a new point.
- Signposting is crucial to good method and presenting a clear argument.
- Signposting needs to be clear and simple:
 - “The **FIRST POINT** I will discuss is...”
 - “Now I will move onto my **SECOND ARGUMENT**...”
 - “The **FINAL POINT** I would like to raise is...”
- Use **PAUSES** to emphasise a shift in your points.

What to rebut





Grounds for Rebuttal

Generally speaking, you can rebut an argument on the following grounds:

1. **Illogical:** The reasoning upon which the argument is based simply doesn't make sense.
2. **Irrelevant:** The argument has little to do with the actual topic of the debate.
3. **Inaccurate:** The information or examples they presented is factually incorrect.
4. **Unacceptable:** There are other consequences or effects, beyond what the opposition has mentioned, which make what they are proposing unacceptable.
5. **Unclear:** Their argument has not been explained in sufficient detail, with key things left out. You must explain what makes it unclear.
6. **Marginal:** Their argument may be correct, but it is a relatively minor point. Your arguments are, in comparison, much more significant.



Structure of a Rebuttal

1. *The opposition tried to argue that ...*

Briefly restate their point...

2. *This argument is wrong/irrelevant/ should be given little weight because ...*

Tell us what you think is wrong with their argument. You must explain your reasoning...

3. *It would therefore be better to...*

Offer your team's alternative position, redirecting the debate towards what your team has been arguing...



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