

# **THE NCFCA COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO POLICY DEBATE**

**Coach's Manual**

**National Christian Forensics and Communications Association**

**By Christy Shipe**

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First Edition, August 2017

Institute for Excellence in Writing, L.L.C.

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*The NCFCA Comprehensive Guide to Policy Debate  
Coach's Manual*

First Edition, August 2017

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# PREFACE

Twenty years ago, homeschool debate got its start under the leadership of the Home School Legal Defense Association. I was privileged to run that program for HSLDA and write a policy debate textbook to help beginners get started in the activity. That textbook has since gone through several editions, and the book you are now holding in your hands is the latest reworking of what used to be called *An Introduction to Policy Debate*. With the blessing of HSLDA, I am pleased to now be writing this new edition for the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association, the league that developed out of the original HSLDA debate program. I currently serve on the Board of Directors of the NCFCA and am proud to be an advocate for and educator in the league. I'm also excited about partnering with a new publisher, the Institute for Excellence in Writing. IEW has been a strong supporter of the NCFCA and is a natural partner in helping spread the important activity of debate to Christian students.

Whether you are a student, educator, or parent, I want to preface this book with a few very important principles that I hope will strongly guide your understanding of debate. First, it is of the utmost importance that the Christian's goal in learning debate should be to gain life skills in order to glorify God. Competition is an excellent training ground for enhancing those skills, but winning competitions is not the ultimate goal of learning debate. God must get the glory, not us. Do your utmost to focus on serving God and bringing Him glory as you engage with the activity of debate.

Second, as you focus on serving and glorifying God, you will naturally begin to love the other people who are also involved in debate, because God is love. Anyone who loves God must love his brother as the Scriptures tell us (1 John 4:21). Part of loving others in debate means showing them common courtesy during competition and refusing to engage in practices that are rude or insensitive. Some of these practices include presenting new arguments in rebuttals when the other team won't have a chance to answer, bullying opponents during cross-examination, and mishandling evidence. This one question should guide everything said and done in the debate round: Is it loving?

Third, understand that the theory of debate is debatable! While competitors have great freedom in the round to debate what is acceptable theory and practice, please understand that the best way to keep that freedom is by being responsible. If competitors will keep love as their guide, then a robust and diverse practice of debate will flourish. If instead competitors begin to adopt a style of tactics designed to gain an unfair advantage in the round, they may find those freedoms will not last long.

Finally, please keep the activity of debate in perspective. Once again, competition serves the greater goal of gaining life skills. Some families are tempted to make attending competitions and winning debates the primary goal of their high school years. It is easy to allow any kind of competition to become an identity rather than a skill. When things go well, everyone feels good about themselves. When things don't go well, everyone is upset. It is easy to become angry and place blame on others. Please keep this activity in its right place—it is an educational process designed to teach students communication skills. Whether competitors win or lose, they are still gaining the life skills that God can use for His glory.

More than ever, we need Christian young people who can communicate God's love and truth to a confused world. My prayer is that every student who learns debate will use those skills to further the kingdom of Christ.

Happy debating!

*Christy Shipe*

June 21, 2017

Sample



# HOW TO USE THE COACH'S MANUAL

This book has been designed to be used as a twelve-week policy debate course for both novice and experienced students. You will find a syllabus on page 7 that gives a quick overview of the course. Each week, students will read the lesson in advance of the class and be prepared for discussion questions and activities that reinforce the material presented in the Competitor's Handbook. At the end of each meeting, you will assign student homework as outlined in the weekly lessons. This homework is designed to help students through the course as well as prepare all of the research and material they will need to compete in a debate tournament.

You do not have to be a debate expert in order to lead this course! The Coach's Manual is designed to give you all the tools you need in order to guide students through the course. This Manual includes answers to all of the discussion questions, worksheets, and quizzes with detailed explanations to help you aid students' understanding. Each weekly lesson is designed so that you can simply follow the outline provided in the lesson. Estimated times are given for each portion of the lesson so that you can gauge your time as you go through the activities and adjust the lessons as needed based on your time constraints. Except where noted, each lesson is easily adapted to a 90-minute meeting time. Every lesson can also be easily stretched to accommodate a 2-hour meeting time if you have that luxury.

This Manual also includes all of the material contained in the Competitor's Handbook. For each lesson in this manual, the detailed coaching instructions and activities are included first and then the material the student is supposed to read for each lesson follows.

As you will notice in the syllabus, the final weeks require some extra planning in order to hold class debate rounds. You will need a facility large enough for all of your teams to participate in rounds. (Example: If you have thirty-two students with four students per round, you would need eight rooms for debate rounds.) You will also need one adult judge per round. Depending on the size of your class, there are other exercises throughout the course that will benefit from having a few extra adults on hand to facilitate small group discussions. The Coach's Manual notes where extra adult help is needed for activities. Encourage the parents of your students to remain available throughout the course to assist student learning.

Some weeks, the lesson includes a Coach's Assignment at the end of the lesson. These assignments are designed to help you plan exercises that need more than a day to prepare.

Every lesson notes what kinds of materials you will need each week. If you are using the companion DVD, which is highly recommended, you will need a method for viewing the DVD. Other than that, all the materials consist of simple things like pens, paper, notepads, and Bibles. All of the worksheets and quizzes are provided in this Manual. Students also have a copy of all of the worksheets and quizzes that they need in their handbooks. (There are some resources that are just for you or for judges that are only included in this Manual and not in the Competitor's Handbook.)

Be sure to carefully read the lesson ahead of each weekly meeting so that you can anticipate what is needed and be prepared for leading the class discussion.

## Picking Partners

Team debate requires two students to partner together for the duration of the course. Although some students may enter the class with a partner already, many others may not know whom to choose as a partner. The partner survey will help you assess how to help students find a partner. Matching students with a teammate is a delicate task, requiring prayer, tact, and a partnership with all of the parents involved. It is best if you invite students and their parents to work with you to pick the partners, rather than assigning partners with no input from the families.

## Sharing Evidence

As students begin to research the debate topic, they will be writing affirmative cases and preparing negative briefs. Writing cases and briefs is hard work, and students should be honored for the work that they do. Some students are hesitant to share that work with others for three main reasons. First, hard-working students are not always eager to reward lazier students with the fruits of their labor. Second, debaters are sometimes looking to surprise the other team with arguments and evidence that the other team is not prepared to handle in order to gain an advantage in the debate round. Third, students may be willing to share evidence inside their class or club, but might be worried about someone sharing it with others outside of the club.

Most clubs do share evidence within their club, and this Manual and the Competitor's Handbook encourages that practice. The first concern listed above should be eliminated if all of the students in your class are completing the homework as assigned. Be sure to check homework as instructed at the beginning of each lesson and gently confront those who are not pulling their weight in class.

You should address the second concern with your students by explaining that for the purposes of this course, it will be much better to refrain from “surprising” the other team with a new case or new evidence during class debates. Students will not learn how to present counterevidence and counterarguments if they are completely unprepared. Therefore, generous sharing of evidence within the club or class should be encouraged. If you are coaching a competitive club, the third concern—someone sharing evidence outside of the club—is valid. You should address it directly with students by informing them that evidence shared within the club stays within the club. It is not to be shared outside of the club for any reason unless the evidence being shared is completely the work of the individual student sharing it. Of course, individuals may decide with whom they would like to share their own work. But these individuals should be sure that the work they are sharing is completely their own (and they would also be wise to get permission from their partners).

Consider two different scenarios that illustrate the legitimate concern of sharing evidence outside of the club. In the first scenario, a team from your club, we'll call them Team A, is competing at a tournament against a team from another club (Outside Team). Meanwhile, Team B, also from your club, is very competitive with Team A. They decide to give the Outside Team a copy of Team A's new case to help the Outside Team win the round. You can surely see how Team B should not be free to give an outside team a copy of something that is the work of someone else in their club.

But consider this second scenario. Team A makes friends with the Outside Team at a tournament. They decide to share evidence with them during the tournament in order to help each other out. When the Outside Team goes up against an affirmative case they've never heard of, Team A offers to let them borrow the negative brief it has prepared against that case. The negative brief is entirely the work of Team A and no one else in their club. This kind of evidence sharing is permissible.

The key to managing evidence sharing is to honor the original work of each student and allow each student to decide how their work is shared outside of the club.

## **Focusing on Christ**

Remember to constantly lead the students back to the purpose of learning debate. The purpose of debate is to help students learn the skills necessary to address life issues from a biblical worldview in a manner that glorifies God. It is difficult to keep students' focus on gaining skills rather than on winning rounds, but take every opportunity to remind them that the real value of debate is found in honing their skills and not piling up wins. Of course, winning is often a good measure of skill and is always the goal of competition. But it is the acquisition of skills that should be celebrated rather than the number of wins.

Furthermore, the skills students gain should be used in service to the Lord. Do not hesitate to gently confront behavior that is not glorifying to God. Students who excel in debate often struggle with pride and a lack of love for others. Remind them that without love, they are merely a noisy gong—annoying everyone and edifying no one. In the end, character matters more than skill.

# POLICY DEBATE CLASS SYLLABUS

CM = Coach's Manual

CH = Competitor's Handbook

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## Before the first meeting

Assign students to read Lesson 1 in the Competitor's Handbook.

## Week 1 - Lesson 1: Why Debate?

DVD Lecture 1

- Activity 1.1 - Outline Speech Order
- Activity 1.2 - Bible Study  
-Bible Study Worksheet (CM)

## Week 2 - Lesson 2: Principles of Logic

DVD Lecture 2

- Activity 2.1 - Using the Toulmin Model  
-Toulmin Model Worksheet (CM & CH)
- Activity 2.2 - Identifying Logical Fallacies

## Week 3 - Lesson 3: Research & Evidence

DVD Lecture 3

- Activity 3.1 - Listening to Evidence  
-Listening to Evidence Worksheet (CM)
- Activity 3.2 - Cutting and Tagging Evidence

## Week 4 - Lesson 4: Stock Issues, Part 1

DVD Lecture 4A

- Activity 4.1 - Identifying the Stock Issues  
-Stock Issues Worksheet (CM & CH)
- Activity 4.2 - Case Discussion

## Week 5 - Lesson 5: Stock Issues, Part 2

► *If you're not using the DVD, this week requires you to stage a live debate round for the class to watch.*

DVD Debate Round 1

DVD Lecture 4B

**Week 6** - Lesson 6: Affirmative Case Construction

DVD Lecture 5

- Activity 6.1 - Creating Affirmative Cases
  - Case Topic List (CM)
  - Create-a-Case Worksheet (CM & CH)
- Activity 6.2 - Identifying Stock Issues in Cases

**Week 7** - Lesson 7: Negative Strategies

DVD Lecture 6

- Activity 7.1 - Four-point Refutation
  - Four-point Refutation Worksheet (CM & CH)
- Activity 7.2 - Developing a Negative Philosophy

**Week 8** - Lesson 8: Rebuttal of the Affirmative Case

- Activity 8.1 - Constructing a Disadvantage
  - Constructing a Disadvantage Worksheet (CM & CH)
- Activity 8.2 - Negative Brainstorming

**Week 9** - Lesson 9: Speaker Responsibilities

► *This week requires all teams to participate in debate rounds in front of judges.*

DVD Lecture 7

- Activity 9.1 - Speaker Responsibility Quiz
  - Speaker Responsibility Quiz (CM & CH)
- Activity 9.2 - Constructive Debate Round
  - Cross-Examination Feedback Worksheet (CM)
  - Student Cross-X Response Worksheet (CM & CH)

**Week 10** - Lesson 10: Speech and Delivery

► *This week requires all teams to participate in debate rounds in front of judges.*

DVD Lecture 8

- Activity 10.1 - Full Debate Round
  - Speech Quality Judge Worksheet (CM)
  - Speech Quality Student Worksheet (CM & CH)

## Week 11 - Lesson 11: Audience Analysis

► *This week requires an adult audience for Activity 11.2. However, optional exercises are given if you are not able to gather an audience.*

- Activity 11.1 - Brainstorming
- Activity 11.2 - Ask the Audience
- Activity 11.3 - Cereal Box Analysis  
-Audience Analysis Worksheet (CM & CH)
- Activity 11.4 - Agree or Disagree?  
-Agree or Disagree? Worksheet (CM & CH)

## Week 12 - Lesson 12: The Debate Round

► *This week requires all teams to participate in debate rounds in front of judges.*

DVD Lecture 9

- Activity 12.1 - Full Debate Round OR One Day NCFCA Tournament

## POLICY DEBATE CLASS

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# LESSON 1

# LESSON 1

## INTRODUCTION TO DEBATE

### SUMMARY

This short lesson explains what academic debate is and why the skills it teaches are important for Christian students to learn.

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to define academic debate.
- Students will learn the cross-examination debate team format (order of speeches).
- Students will identify the skills developed by studying debate.
- Students will understand what the Bible says about speech and debate.
- Students will be able to explain how they can love God and love others by developing the skills that debate teaches.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- DVD and screen for viewing (*optional*)
- Whiteboard and markers or blackboard and chalk (*optional*)
- Bible Study Worksheet (pp.16-21)
- At least seven Bibles for students (Ask them to bring their Bibles to the first class.)
- One blank piece of paper per student
- Pens or pencils
- Timepiece

### CLASS AGENDA

- Welcome: 5 minutes
- Student Introductions: 10–15 minutes
- DVD Lecture 1: 8 minutes
- Discussion of Lesson 1: 10–15 minutes
- Activity 1.1 (Outline Speech Order): 5 minutes
- Activity 1.2 (Bible Study): 30–40 minutes
- Topic Discussion: 15–30 minutes
- Assignment: 5 minutes

**TOTAL: 1.5–2 hours**



**LEADER NOTES****Welcome****5 minutes**

Introduce yourself and outline your expectations for the class, e.g., assignments completed each week before class, research will be required, students will be regularly practicing speaking in front of the group, etc.

**Student Introductions****10–15 minutes**

Have students introduce themselves one at a time and explain why they are in the class. Allow no more than one minute per student. Even if you only have one student, have her verbally explain why she is studying debate. It is important for students of debate to get comfortable speaking in front of others. If you have more than fifteen students, consider one of the following options:

1. Break into smaller groups to have students introduce themselves to one another.
2. Split your students into two groups of ten to fifteen individuals and have Group 1 introduce themselves this week and Group 2 introduce themselves the following week.

Students may give reasons ranging from “my parents are forcing me to do this” to “I’ve been waiting since I was born to join NCFCA!” No answer is a bad answer. Just get the students up and speaking in front of an audience.

**DVD Lecture****8 minutes**

The DVD is optional but does enhance the understanding of the concepts presented in the student guide. It also illustrates the concepts using clips from a debate round so that students can see debate theory in action.

**Discussion of Lesson 1****10–15 minutes**

Students should have completed reading Lesson 1 in the Competitor’s Handbook prior to the first meeting. Guide them through the following discussion questions to check for understanding. You may choose to write answers on a whiteboard or blackboard as students share ideas.

1. What is academic debate?  
*Academic debate is a structured style of argumentation that follows a certain format and rules with a judge who decides who wins the round. (p.24)*
2. What types of skills does the study of debate develop?  
*Answers may include*
  - communication skills
  - mental skills such as logic and critical thinking
  - research skills
  - persuasion
  - the ability to ask penetrating questions
  - the ability to respond graciously and accurately to an opponent’s attacks
  - the ability to organize information
3. What do you personally hope to gain from your study of debate?  
*Answers will vary.*

### Activity 1.1

5 minutes

#### Outline Speech Order

##### *Objective*

Students will learn the team policy debate format (order of speeches).

##### *Materials needed*

- One blank piece of paper per student
- One pen or pencil per student
- Timepiece

##### *Instructions*

Give each student a blank sheet of paper and pen or pencil. Give everyone 2-3 minutes to write out the order of speeches in a team policy debate round. You can optionally have them include the time limits in addition to the names of the speeches. For extra credit, have them name the questioner and respondent for each of the cross-examination times. The speech order is outlined in this text on page 26.

### Activity 1.2

30–40 minutes

#### Bible Study

##### *Objective*

Students will learn what the Bible says about speech and debate.

##### *Materials needed*

- Bible Study Worksheet (pp. 16-21)
- At least seven Bibles for students (Ask them to bring their Bibles to the first class.)
- Whiteboard and markers or chalkboard and chalk (optional)

##### *Prep*

- Read the Bible verses ahead of time and think about what Scripture has to say regarding speech and debate.
- Copy the Bible Study Worksheet and cut into strips. Keep the Group A verses separate from the Group B verses. Putting them into separate envelopes would be a good idea.

*Instructions*

Say, “Let’s look at what the Bible says about debate and the skills debate teaches, like research and logic. Why should we learn these skills, according to the Bible?” Depending on the size of your group, you may give each student a Bible verse, or split students into groups of two or more and give each group a Bible verse. Start with the Group A verses. Distribute them to the group.

If you are working in groups, tell the groups to appoint one person to read the verse aloud to the whole group and one person to share the reason(s) why Christians should learn debate. Give students a few minutes to read and think about their verses. After students appear ready, go student by student (or group by group), and ask them to read the verse aloud and then give the reasons the Bible gives for why Christians should learn the skills debate teaches.

As students give reasons to learn debate, you may optionally choose to write those reasons on a whiteboard or chalkboard. At the end of the Group A verses, ask “In what practical ways can you use the skills debate teaches to love God and love others?” Let students share their answers with the whole group.

Then repeat the entire exercise with the Group B verses. To introduce the Group B verses, say “Part of defining something can be looking at what it is not. What warnings does Scripture give about speech and debate?” After students share their answers, end the activity with this final question: “After looking at what speech and debate should not be, what then can we conclude about what speech and debate should be?” Allow students to share their thoughts.

**NOTE:** If you are only teaching one student, the two of you should examine all the verses together.

**Topic Discussion****15–30 minutes**

Introduce the current NCFCA policy debate topic to the group. If you have experienced debaters as part of your group, ask them to briefly share their preliminary research with the group. Ask them to give a big picture look at the topic only; keep them from giving too many details! The idea here is to get the group thinking in general terms about the topic area, or you may give a broad overview of the topic yourself. You may spend all of your time discussing the topic as a group, or after giving a 10–15 minute overview of the topic, you may split students into smaller groups to discuss it among themselves.

### Student Assignment

5 minutes

- *Research.* Students should begin reading about the general topic area. Novices should bring one book or article on the topic to the next meeting, and experienced debaters should bring three books or articles to the next meeting. You may optionally have students turn in articles online instead of bringing physical copies to the meeting as long as they are digitally accessible during the meeting time.
- *Reading.* Read Lesson 2. Be ready for a quiz on logical fallacies and the Toulmin Model.
- *Partner Survey.* Instruct students to fill out the Team Debate Partnership Questionnaire on page 190 of the Competitor's Handbook and bring it with them to the next meeting.
- *Activity.* Each student should bring one advertisement and one opinion piece to the next meeting. Opinion pieces can be found in any newspaper in the opinion or editorial section.

### Leader Assignment

Based on students' partnership questionnaires and conversations with students and their parents, work to finalize experienced debaters' partnerships during the next two weeks.

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\* An easy way for managing assignments would be to create a shared file folder online (such as Google Docs or Dropbox) where students can share evidence and briefs. You can make sure assignments are done on time by checking that each student has put the required files into the shared folder.

# Bible Study Worksheet

## ACTIVITY 1.2

*It is preferred that students bring their Bibles to class to look up each verse with its surrounding context. However, you may use the prepared verses if it is impractical to bring Bibles to class.*

*Cut verse references into strips and distribute to the class.*

### GROUP A Verses

Acts 17:11

Proverbs 31:8

1 Peter 3:15

2 Corinthians 10:3–5

Colossians 2:2–4

Acts 18:24–28

Acts 17:1–4

ACTIVITY 1.2 - BIBLE STUDY WORKSHEET

**GROUP B Verses**

1 Timothy 6:20–21

1 Corinthians 13:1

2 Timothy 2:23–25

Titus 3:9

1 Timothy 1:5–7

1 Corinthians 1:20–25

James 3:5–12

## ACTIVITY 1.2 - BIBLE STUDY WORKSHEET

### GROUP A Verses

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

**Acts 17:11**

Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute.

**Proverbs 31:8**

...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...

**1 Peter 3:15**

For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ...

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

## ACTIVITY 1.2 - BIBLE STUDY WORKSHEET

...that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.

**Colossians 2:2-4**

Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

**Acts 18:24-28**

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.

**Acts 17:1-4**



## ACTIVITY 1.2 - BIBLE STUDY WORKSHEET

### GROUP B Verses

O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.

Grace be with you.

**1 Timothy 6:20–21**

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

**1 Corinthians 13:1**

Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth....

**2 Timothy 2:23–25**

But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.

**Titus 3:9**

## ACTIVITY 1.2 - BIBLE STUDY WORKSHEET

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Certain persons, by swerving from these, have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law, without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

**1 Timothy 1:5-7**

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

**1 Corinthians 1:20-25**

So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

**James 3:5-12**

# LESSON 1

## INTRODUCTION TO DEBATE

---

*Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.*

– John Milton, *Areopagitica*

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### SUMMARY

This short lesson explains what academic debate is and why the skills it teaches are important for Christian students to learn.

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will be able to define academic debate.
  - Students will learn the cross-examination debate team format (order of speeches).
  - Students will identify the skills developed by studying debate.
  - Students will understand what the Bible says about speech and debate.
  - Students will be able to explain how they can love God and love others by developing the skills that debate teaches.
- 

The right to argue freely is a right that has been prized throughout history. From the time of the ancient Greeks, the art of debate has been instrumental in shaping the philosophy, politics, and culture of mankind. America's founding fathers highly prized the right to argue freely, enshrining that principle in the First Amendment to our Constitution. Political rulers will become tyrants, the founders argued, unless the people are guaranteed the right to speak and debate freely about the issues that affect their lives.

Yet it is not only leaders and rulers who practice the art of debate. Chances are that you have probably been arguing with your parents, siblings, and friends on a variety of issues since you were quite young. *Webster's 1828 Dictionary* provides this helpful definition of the word argue: "To persuade by reasons." Debate is simply the art of persuading by reasons, which is a common part of our experience as human beings. Academic debate is an educational way to learn the skills you need to speak persuasively in real life.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF DEBATE

There are many important reasons to learn the art of academic debate. First and foremost, academic debate is a tool that you can use to fulfill the two greatest commands of Scripture: to love the Lord with all of your heart, soul, strength, and mind and to love your neighbor as yourself (*English Standard Version*, Matthew 22:26-40). The study of debate is one way that you can greatly develop your critical thinking skills and thus improve the ability of your mind to love the Lord. Although God has granted us the ability to reason, he does not wave a wand over our minds to magically make them think logically, learn how to properly analyze arguments, study important issues, form conclusions, and think through the best way to communicate our beliefs to others. Instead, he expects us to be good stewards of the minds he has given us by actively disciplining and training our minds to think rightly (Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:22-24, Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:2, 1 Peter 1:3).

By studying academic debate, you will develop important mental skills that God can greatly use if you choose to let Him. It is very important to remember that debate itself is only a tool. That tool can be used for good or for evil. In order to learn debate in a way that will allow you to love the Lord with all of your mind, you must constantly submit yourself (and your mind) to His lordship. Submitting your mind to the lordship of Christ means that you will base all of your thinking, reasoning, and conclusions upon the highest truth that exists, which is the Word of God.

Submitting to the lordship of Christ also means that you will use your debate skills to love rather than to hurt others. You cannot fulfill the greatest commandments by using debate skills to disrespect your parents, show off to your friends, or cut someone down. Instead, God wants to use you and the communication skills you will learn in debate to reach others with the truth of the gospel (Romans 10:14), to build up others (Ephesians 4:29), to demolish lies and replace them with truth (2 Corinthians 10:5), and to stand up for those who cannot defend themselves (Proverbs 24:11, Isaiah 1:17). Learning academic debate will greatly increase your ability to communicate effectively for God.

Academic debate is also a practical endeavor. As you learn how to ask penetrating questions, develop the ability to respond graciously and accurately to opponent's attacks, organize information, or communicate complex ideas in simple ways, you are learning the skills that will greatly help you in life. It is important to think of debate as learning a life skill, rather than playing a game. Debate practiced as a game tends to train speakers who can only communicate well with others who understand the rules of the game. Debate practiced as a life skill, on the other hand, tends to train speakers who can communicate with anyone regardless of their knowledge of debate theory.

Keep your eye on the goal of learning a style of real-world communication that will make sense to the average person, rather than adopting sophisticated styles and strategies that only a debate expert could understand. The goal of playing a game is winning that game. The goal of learning a life skill is the practical and effective application of that skill in the real world. The real prize of debate is learning skills that will last a lifetime, not necessarily winning the debate round.

Whether you hope to be a lawyer, an engineer, a plumber, a mother, a doctor, or a teacher, the skills you learn in debate will help you in your career. No matter what you plan to do in life, you will face situations in which you must be able to give an answer for what you believe, often in the face of another's arguments. Whether you are witnessing to someone about the gospel, applying for a job, trying to convince someone to take action on a political issue, or reading the newspaper, the skills developed by debate are invaluable. Simply learning to think analytically and evaluate arguments will tremendously benefit anything you do in life.

Finally, experienced debaters will tell you that the activity is one of the most invigorating and exciting experiences you can have. Academic debate is very challenging—even scary and intimidating—but it can also be a lot of fun.

### DEBATE DEFINED

Academic debate is a structured style of argumentation that follows a certain format and rules (such as time limits for speeches), has a judge who decides which team wins the round, and is done for an educational purpose. This book deals with a specific type of academic debate, namely cross-examination debate.

There are two kinds of cross-examination debate: value debate and policy debate. Policy debate usually involves a current policy challenge facing our country—such as health care, taxes, or education—and gives debaters a chance to enter into the national debate and come up with their own plan to solve the problem. Value debate involves a discussion of the values that often underlie policy decisions such as safety, liberty, or life. For example, if we value safety more than liberty, that might justify government policies that support closely monitoring its citizens' private information. Value debate has policy implications, but does not get into questions of workability or a plan to solve a specific problem.

Cross-examination debate includes two different speaker formats: Lincoln-Douglas (LD) debate and team debate. In the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA), the Lincoln-Douglas format always uses a value topic, and the team debate format always uses a policy topic. The other difference between LD and team debate is the number of people on each team. LD debate consists of only one person per side (one affirmative speaker and one negative speaker) while team debate has two people per side (two affirmative speakers and two negative speakers). Since there are more people in the team debate round, it is the longer of the two formats. This text will deal exclusively with team policy debate.

## Debate Resolution

Team policy debate involves two teams debating a specific topic chosen by the debate association. Most debate leagues choose only one policy topic for an entire debate season. Here are some examples of policy topics debated in the NCFCA:

*Resolved: That the United States Federal Government should significantly change its policy toward India.*

*Resolved: That medical malpractice law should be significantly reformed in the United States.*

*Resolved: That the United States should change its energy policy to substantially reduce its dependence on foreign oil.*

*Resolved: That the 16th Amendment to the United States Constitution should be repealed and replaced with an alternate tax policy.*

Note that all of the topics start with the word *resolved* as if these statements are being formally given in front of a legislature or governing body. This style is part of academic debate, and debaters call the topic of the debate the *resolution*.

## Debate Tournament

Academic debate is organized into a series of rounds. Each debate round consists of two teams arguing a single topic in front of a judge. A debate tournament is made up of many rounds of debate, usually six preliminary rounds for all teams entered into the tournament and then elimination rounds in which the teams with the best records in the preliminary rounds compete.

The two teams who meet in the debate round will be assigned a side to take in the debate. During a debate tournament, each team will take turns arguing on both sides of the resolution so that debaters thoroughly learn each topic. For example, using the medical malpractice topic above, your team might argue that medical malpractice needs serious reform in the first round and then argue that no reform is needed in the second round. This may seem strange to new debaters, but you will soon realize that the best way to know how to defend what you believe is to thoroughly understand all of your opponent's arguments. By learning to debate both sides of the resolution, you will learn the skills necessary to defend what you truly believe.

The team arguing in support of the resolution is called the affirmative team, and the team that argues against the resolution is called the negative team. For example, using the same medical malpractice topic, the affirmative side would argue that malpractice law should be reformed while the negative side would argue that no reform is needed. The resolution is always worded toward the affirmative side of the debate.

Note that the way the policy topics are worded on page 25 gives the affirmative team the ability to choose what kind of change to current policy it wants to make. The broadness of the resolution means not every affirmative team will make the same kind of change. There will usually be at least twenty possible changes that can be made to affirm a resolution.

When the affirmative team chooses what kind of change it wants to make, it will write a case making that change. So, with the energy policy resolution, an affirmative team could choose a case that opens up oil reserves in national parks. Or perhaps it will write a case to invest in solar power. All of the possibilities for affirming the resolution are called *case areas* by debaters. Debaters will not know ahead of time which teams they will face in the tournament and so must be prepared to argue on the negative against all of the likely case areas as well as defend their own affirmative case.

### Team Debate Format

Since there are two speakers for each side in team debate, each speaker is numbered. On the affirmative side, the speakers are named the first affirmative speaker and the second affirmative speaker. On the negative side, the speakers are named the first negative speaker and the second negative speaker. The speeches are named as well. There are constructive speeches (where arguments are first made or constructed), cross-examinations (where questions are asked), and rebuttals (where arguments made in the constructive speeches are refuted and refined).

Here is the format used for a team policy debate round:

First Affirmative Constructive (1AC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (by the 2N)	3 minutes
First Negative Constructive (1NC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (by the 1A)	3 minutes
Second Affirmative Constructive (2AC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (by the 1N)	3 minutes
Second Negative Constructive (2NC)	8 minutes
Cross-Examination (by the 2A)	3 minutes
First Negative Rebuttal (1NR)	5 minutes
First Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR)	5 minutes
Second Negative Rebuttal (2NR)	5 minutes
Second Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR)	5 minutes



The speeches are commonly referred to by their abbreviations given above. Each speaker has different responsibilities and different requirements which will be discussed in Lesson 9.

Notice the order of the cross-examinations. The 1A is cross-examined by the 2N, the 1N is cross-examined by the 2A, and so on. The reason for this order is simple. After each constructive speech, the member of the opposite team that does not have to speak next must cross-examine the person who just spoke.

Speaker order can be confusing for the beginning debater. Do not worry about forgetting which speech comes next or when you are supposed to speak. More experienced debaters are quick to help those with less experience to keep a debate round running smoothly. After a few rounds of debate, you will easily remember the speaker order.

Time limits are strictly enforced in debate (although you will be allowed to finish your sentence). Many tournaments have timekeepers who keep time for each speech and will let you know when your speech time has run out. Right now, you may be thinking that you won't ever need a timekeeper to stop your speech. In fact, you may be wondering how you will ever be able to speak for eight solid minutes! However, once you are well-prepared for a debate, you will find that eight minutes flies by quickly. You will have to work hard to make your arguments as concise as possible in order to leave enough time for everything you want to say.

Each team also receives five minutes of preparation time during the round in order to prepare before their speeches. You can use your prep time, in whole or in part, between any of the constructive speeches and rebuttals, but you cannot use your prep time before a cross-examination. The prep time is taken from the team that has to speak next. The judge or timekeeper usually keeps track of prep time for each team.

### **Judging Debate**

After the round is over, the judge will fill out a ballot with the following information: 1) which team won or lost the round, 2) speaker points for each individual speaker in the round, and 3) comments about the reason for the decision as well as constructive comments for the debaters. A sample ballot is given on the following page.

#### *Win/Loss*

Usually, the judge votes for either the affirmative or negative team. In rare cases, NCFCA allows the judge to give a double loss if the judge cannot in good conscience vote for a team whose behavior was blatantly rude and abusive throughout the round, even if its arguments were sound. In most double-loss situations, one team did an extremely poor job of argumentation, and the other team was so rude that the judge could not vote for either team.





**Aff** Smith T./Jones L.

**Neg** Miller J./Lewis J.

Regional Qualifier

Room F103

Round 2 12:00 PM

**Affirmative**

Name  
1A Laurie Jones

Speaker Rank  
Best ..... Last  
1 2 3 4

Speaker Points	Poor.....	Excellent
Persuasiveness	1 2 3 4 5	
Organization	1 2 3 4 5	
Delivery/Conduct	1 2 3 4 5	
Evidence	1 2 3 4 5	
Cross-Examination	1 2 3 4 5	
Refutation	1 2 3 4 5	

Total  
22

Comments  
*Great 1AC!  
Need to work on organizing  
1AR to cover most important  
issues in the round. Overall,  
good job!*

Name  
2A Todd Smith

Speaker Rank  
Best ..... Last  
1 2 3 4

Speaker Points	Poor.....	Excellent
Persuasiveness	1 2 3 4 5	
Organization	1 2 3 4 5	
Delivery/Conduct	1 2 3 4 5	
Evidence	1 2 3 4 5	
Cross-Examination	1 2 3 4 5	
Refutation	1 2 3 4 5	

Total  
25

Comments  
*Excellent 2AR. Your  
summary of the issues  
won the round for your  
team. Work on speaking slowly.*

**Negative**

Name  
1N Jason Miller

Speaker Rank  
Best ..... Last  
1 2 3 4

Speaker Points	Poor.....	Excellent
Persuasiveness	1 2 3 4 5	
Organization	1 2 3 4 5	
Delivery/Conduct	1 2 3 4 5	
Evidence	1 2 3 4 5	
Cross-Examination	1 2 3 4 5	
Refutation	1 2 3 4 5	

Total  
20

Comments  
*Nice 1NC,  
good response to aff case.  
Work on keeping control  
of CX as the questioner.*

Name  
2N John Lewis

Speaker Rank  
Best ..... Last  
1 2 3 4

Speaker Points	Poor.....	Excellent
Persuasiveness	1 2 3 4 5	
Organization	1 2 3 4 5	
Delivery/Conduct	1 2 3 4 5	
Evidence	1 2 3 4 5	
Cross-Examination	1 2 3 4 5	
Refutation	1 2 3 4 5	

Total  
18

Comments  
*Your passion  
showed in the 2AC but  
you seemed confused in  
the 2NR. Relax, smile!*

Affirmative



Decision



Double Loss

Negative



Reason for Decision

*Aff convinced me that a change is needed  
in our current system. Although neg  
proved that there would be some complexity  
with administration, aff proved that their  
plan will work better than the status quo.*

Judge Name

*Judy Barr*

Date

*Jan 3, 2014*

CTaP - TP Ballot

### *Speaker Rank and Speaker Points*

Speaker rank and speaker points are awarded to each debater in the round during the preliminary rounds of a debate tournament. Each speaker is ranked relative to the other debaters in the round. The best speaker in the round is given a rank of one, the second speaker a rank of two, and so on.

Speaker points are determined on a 30-point scale. Judges award up to 5 points for each of the following six categories: persuasiveness, organization, delivery/conduct, evidence, cross-examination, and refutation (see sample ballot). Most speakers do not achieve a perfect score of 30 points. Excellent speakers usually receive 25 points and above. Good speakers usually receive 20 points and above. Speaker rank and speaker points are subjective; they are entirely determined by the individual judge.

Cumulative speaker rank and points are used to break ties in determining which teams will advance to the elimination rounds of the tournament. Points and rank are not awarded during the elimination rounds as there is no need to break ties in elimination rounds. At the end of the tournament, special speaker awards are given to the individuals with the highest speaker points and ranking accumulated during the preliminary rounds.

### *Comments*

Judges are not allowed to share their decisions or discuss the round with the debaters during the tournament. Instead, they will write whatever comments they have to share on the ballot. It is up to the judge to decide what to share on the ballot, and sometimes there may not be any comments. Although comments are helpful, they are not necessary in order to know if you were persuasive to the judge. The win or loss will ultimately tell you how persuasive you were.

Debate teams are not given their ballots until the end of the tournament. You will not find out whether you won or lost a round until then. However, you will find out which teams will advance to elimination rounds after the preliminary rounds are complete. At that point in the tournament, you will at least know if you were among the top teams in the tournament, but you will not know your exact record until the tournament is complete.

## **GETTING STARTED**

The first year in debate is extremely confusing. Expect it. The confusion and chaos affects everyone in debate. Contributing to this confusion are differing ideas about debate theory and practice. Even though there are certain ideas about debate which are fairly standard, there are others which are very controversial. Perspectives on these controversial ideas may vary from coach to coach or debater to debater. Part of the fun of debate is figuring out where you stand on some of the more controversial ideas about the activity itself. As you learn more, you might change your mind, then change it back again on any number of different issues (or, of course, you might not). In any case, you will find yourself swept up in the chaos, trying to make some order for yourself and those with whom you come into contact in the activity.

One of the most interesting things about debate is that debaters often argue not only about the issues in a round, but about the way those issues should be presented, discussed, and evaluated. In other words, debaters not only disagree about issues but also about how they should debate.

As you start your journey into the art of debate, be patient with yourself. Many new debaters are overwhelmed by all there is to learn. The new debate terminology alone can be like learning a foreign language. And on top of that, you're trying to learn how to research some of the most complex issues of our day that even our top lawmakers and reporters in the media have trouble understanding and communicating.

Hang in there. Keep the life goals of debate in mind as you go through the learning process. Many, many students have started just where you are and have gone on to successfully learn the communication skills that are helping them make a real difference for Christ in the world around them. Many of those students have been scared of public speaking, have hated doing research, or have wished the ground would open up and swallow them in the middle of a debate round (the author of this book included!). Yet if all of them could speak personally to you today, they would tell you that learning debate is worth it.

The rewards of debate may not come quickly, but when they come, it is definitely worth the wait. Your new-found ability to reason, to understand the issues of our day, and to communicate with others will give you a confidence that you never knew you had to allow God to use you to reach others and literally change lives. Welcome to the journey!

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is academic debate?
2. What types of skills does the study of debate develop?
3. What do you personally hope to gain from your study of debate?

## HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

### Novice students:

- *Research.* Begin reading about the general topic area. Bring one book or article on the topic to the next meeting.
- *Reading.* Read Lesson 2. Be ready for a quiz on logical fallacies and the Toulmin Model.
- *Partner Survey.* Fill out the Team Debate Partnership Questionnaire on page 190 and bring it with you to the next meeting.
- *Activity.* Bring one advertisement and one opinion piece to the next meeting. Opinion pieces can be found in any newspaper in the opinion or editorial section.

### Experienced students:

- *Research.* Begin reading about the general topic area. Bring three books or articles on the topic to the next meeting.
- *Reading.* Read Lesson 2. Be ready for a quiz on logical fallacies and the Toulmin Model.
- *Partner Survey.* Fill out the Team Debate Partnership Questionnaire on page 190 and bring it with you to the next meeting.
- *Activity.* Bring one advertisement and one opinion piece to the next meeting. Opinion pieces can be found in any newspaper in the opinion or editorial section.