

THE NCFCA COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO VALUE DEBATE

Parent's Guide

National Christian Forensics and Communications Association

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First Edition, April 2019

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

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INTRODUCTION

THE NCFCA COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO VALUE DEBATE *PARENT'S GUIDE*

You and your child are about to embark on a grand adventure! Welcome to NCFCA value debate! NCFCA understands that pursuing education is important, but a head full of knowledge is only beneficial if the knowledge can be communicated effectively. To that end we want to encourage you in your desire to grow the skills of critical thinking and gracious, articulate communication in your child. We want to empower you with practical instruction built on a strong biblical foundation as you are actively preparing your children to be culture shapers and sharpened tools in the hands of a mighty God.

The NCFCA Comprehensive Guide to Value Debate is carefully constructed to propel students toward learning critical thinking skills and godly communication. This 12-week value debate course is designed for both novice and experienced students. The *Coach's Manual* provides the tools coaches need in order to guide students through the lessons each week. It contains lesson plans, answers to the discussion questions in each lessons, activities for each week, worksheets and answers, and helpful information for explaining value debate to students. It also contains the material in the *Competitor's Handbook* for easy reference while preparing and teaching each class.

The *Competitor's Handbook* provides the material students need to complete each lesson. It has weekly readings, discussion questions to answer, and homework assignments. The author presents the material in an easy-to-understand way so that students can grasp the fundamentals of debate and begin building their critical thinking and communication skills.

This *Parent's Guide* provides a brief overview and summary of each lesson for parents, enabling you to help your child through the curriculum. Read the material in the *Competitor's Handbook* for deeper understanding of the material presented here.

Parents, you have an important role when it comes to helping your children prepare for competition. Your guidance and expertise is critical to helping young people develop their communication skills. You can lead them on their learning journey with encouragement, guidance, and feedback as they learn to research values, find evidence, organize files, and write cases. Remember, the students are the ones who are debating, so the more work they do, the better they will understand the topic and compete well. They will build on these skills each year, and parents can provide the wings they need to succeed in competition, as well as in life outside of competition.

We are glad to have you join us in our commitment to train students to be effective communicators and to use their skills to impact people for Christ. We look forward to seeing you at local and national tournaments this year!

BEFORE LESSON ONE

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

ALL STUDENTS

- Read Lesson 1.
- Be prepared to answer the discussion questions.
- Be prepared for a Lesson 1 Terms to Know quiz.

LOGIC ASSIGNMENT

- Read Learning Logic 1.
- Be prepared to answer the questions.

Sample

LESSON ONE

INTRODUCTION TO VALUE DEBATE

The right to argue freely 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.

It is not only leaders and rulers who practice the art of debate. Debate is a common part of our experience as human beings. Chances are that your students have been debating with you, siblings, and friends on a variety of issues for many years. **Debate** is a discussion in which opposing arguments are made in order to persuade. The study of debate provides a structured way to learn the skills needed to speak persuasively in the face of opposition.

FOUNDATION OF DEBATE

Debate is a common part of our experience as human beings, but why? Why do we argue with one another? At a basic level, we argue because we don’t always agree with one another. We want to persuade other people to see things our way. In order to debate, we must understand a few truths about who God is and who man is.

God ...	Man ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ... is infinite.• ... is perfect.• ... is truth.• ... creates.• ... reasons.• ... speaks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ... is created in the image of God.<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The ability to reason– The ability to speak• ... is limited.

SUMMARY

Lesson 1 explains what value debate is and why the skills it teaches are important for Christian students to learn.

OBJECTIVES

- After completing Lesson 1, students will be able to
- summarize the foundation of debate,
 - state the purposes of debate, and
 - explain the basics of Lincoln-Douglas Value debate.

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

John Milton, *Areopagitica*

POINT TO PONDER

Think of debate as learning a life skill, rather than playing a game. The real prize is not winning a debate round but learning skills that will last a lifetime.

PURPOSE OF DEBATE

The purpose of debate is to develop skills that we can use in service to God. The study of debate develops critical thinking skills, reveals probable truth, and strengthens communication skills.

- When students keep God at the center of their debate endeavors, God will develop their reasoning skills, enabling them to know and love Him (Matthew 22:36-40). He will reveal truth, sanctifying them and setting them apart for His purposes (John 17:17), and He will strengthen their ability to communicate complex ideas in simple ways, equipping them to love their neighbors as themselves (Matthew 22:36-40).
- The skills learned in debate will allow students to serve the Lord in many ways. These skills will equip students to understand how others think, discuss timeless ideas, and stand up for truth, giving an answer for what and why they believe, even in the face of another’s argument.
- It is important to think of debate as learning a life skill, rather than playing a game. 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 not winning the debate round but communicating effectively.
- Students should focus on 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.

BASICS OF VALUE DEBATE

ACADEMIC DEBATE

Academic debate is a structured style of argumentation that follows a certain format and rules, provides feedback from a judge, and achieves an educational purpose.

VALUE DEBATE

Value debate examines the values that drive decision-making. Unlike policy debate which asks debaters to consider *how* to solve a policy problem, value debate challenges debaters to consider *why* we should make a choice.

VALUE RESOLUTION

A **resolution** is a proposition which the affirmative team affirms and the negative team negates. In value debate, the resolution is a proposition of value.

Consider the examples of NCFCA resolutions to the right. Each begins with the word *Resolved* as if these statements are being formally given in front of a legislature or governing body. Thus, the debate topic is called the resolution.

Resolutions are worded in a certain direction so that the debaters in the round will have clearly defined sides. In the first example to the right, the affirmative speaker must argue that when in conflict, governments should value fair trade above free trade, while the negative team must argue that when in conflict, governments should not value fair trade above free trade.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of value debate is to persuade the judge to either affirm or negate the resolution. Students should focus on the two questions most judges will have:

1. *What* does the resolution mean? (Definition)
2. *Why* should it be affirmed or negated? (Justification)

LINCOLN-DOUGLAS FORMAT

The **Lincoln-Douglas debate format** is one-on-one debating named after the famous 1858 debates between Senator Stephen Douglas, an Illinois Democrat, and his Republican challenger for the United States Senate, Abraham Lincoln. The two orators staged a series of debates on the controversial topic of slavery, discussing to what extent it would be allowed in the western territories of our country. Many orators have been inspired by these debates, especially by Lincoln's strong pleas to end slavery for moral reasons.

Just as Lincoln and Douglas faced each other on platforms of the past, today's Lincoln-Douglas debaters face one another in a debate round which consists of five speeches, two cross-examinations, and preparation time:

Affirmative Constructive (AC)	6 minutes
Negative Cross-Examination (CX)	3 minutes
Negative Constructive (NC)	7 minutes
Affirmative Cross-Examination (CX)	3 minutes

RESOLUTIONS

1. *Resolved: When in conflict, governments should value fair trade above free trade.*
2. *Resolved: Affirmative action is justified in the United States.*
3. *Resolved: Democracy is overvalued by the United States government.*

LESSON 1

1st Affirmative Rebuttal (1AR)	4 minutes
Negative Rebuttal (NR)	6 minutes
2nd Affirmative Rebuttal (2AR)	3 minutes
Preparation time (each team)	3 minutes

SPEECHES

Constructives are speeches that construct or build arguments. **Rebuttals** are speeches which refine or refute arguments made during the constructives. **Cross-examinations** allow the debaters to ask and answer each others' questions. The speeches are commonly referred to by their abbreviations given above. In addition to speaking time, each team receives a total of three minutes to prepare for speeches. This time is frequently called prep time.

ROUND

When people talk about “the debate round,” they mean one individual debate between two people. A debater might be the affirmative speaker or the negative speaker in the debate round. One complete debate round takes about 40 minutes to complete.

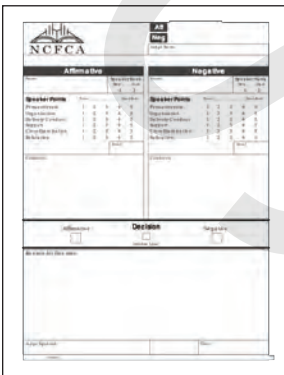
TOURNAMENT

A debate tournament is a series of rounds, typically six preliminary rounds followed by elimination rounds. Every debate team at the tournament competes in the preliminary rounds. Teams with the best records then go on to compete in single-elimination rounds to determine who is the best team at the tournament. More about debate tournaments is explained in Lesson 12.

Each team debates both affirmative and negative sides during the preliminary rounds. With six preliminary rounds, that means a debater would be affirmative three times and negative three times. This practice allows a debater to understand all sides of an issue as well as learn the full set of skills debate has to offer.

BALLOT

In academic debate, volunteer judges evaluate who won the arguments presented in the round and who was the best speaker in the round. Judges can also explain the reason for decision and provide helpful feedback.



A sample ballot is on page 90.

CHALLENGES

The first year in debate can be challenging. Encourage your student to be patient. Learning new debate terminology is like learning a foreign language. Students are aspiring to understand complex value questions that the greatest philosophers have contemplated for centuries.

The rewards of debate may not come quickly, but when they come, they are definitely worth the wait.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

ALL STUDENTS

- Read Lesson 2.
- Be prepared to answer the discussion questions.
- Be prepared for a Lesson 2 Terms to Know quiz.

EXPERIENCED STUDENTS

- Begin general research on the resolution and be prepared to share your findings at the next meeting. Seek to answer these questions:
 1. What do the terms of the resolution mean?
 2. Where is the conflict in this resolution?
 3. What reasons are there for affirming the resolution?
 4. What reasons are there for negating the resolution?

LEARNING LOGIC 1

INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC

The most important tool in a value debater's toolbox is logic. Logic is the art of reasoning well to discover truth and communicate it to others.

Logic exists because God created our world in an orderly way and created us in His image as rational beings. Thus, when we define logic and the rules that govern its practice, we are really just discovering and using what God created for us to discover and use.

Our ability to reason well is limited by the fact that we are fallen creatures whose minds have been marred by sin. Unlike our omniscient God, we have limited brain capacity. Unlike our omnipresent and eternal God, our human thought is limited by space and time. Nevertheless, we can exercise and develop our minds, and we should endeavor to make the most of what God has given to us by being wise stewards of our minds.

HOMework ASSIGNMENT

- Read Learning Logic 2.
- Be prepared to answer the questions.
- Complete the exercise.