INTRODUCTION TO PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE

Communication Applications

Kingwood High School

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Instructors

Contents

Public Forum Debate Unit

Kingwood Comm Apps 2013

The purpose of this unit is to fulfill the persuasive speaking, research, questioning, and listening TEKS for Communication Applications. The students will successfully navigate a Public Forum debate and evaluate the effectiveness of the other debates in the class.

Major Project Components

Assignment	Type	Date
Flowing the Example Round	Formative	TBA
Research File, Page 12.	Summative	Tuesday, November 5
Debate	Summative	Block Day, November 6/7
Debate Flows	Formative	Conclusion of class debates

Lesson 1: Intro to Public Forum Debate:

Objective: *Analyze the components of a Public Forum Debate. Students will show the evidence of their understanding by writing their chosen resolution.*

Public Forum Debate is a 2 vs. 2 debate format where each side (Pro vs. Con) presents their case based on research called "evidence", answers questions posed during "crossfire" periods, and persuades their audience to vote for their side in rebuttals which are called the "Final Focus". The objective is to convince the judge (or the audience) to vote for your team, not to convince your opponents they are wrong.

Public forum debate is not arguing… arguing requires no listening skills and is often rude. Debate requires listening, understanding of both sides of the issue, persuasion based on proven fact not opinion, and manners. Done correctly, public forum is entertaining for both the participants and the audience.

Public Forum Debate Format for Class Debate

In Public Forum, either the Pro or the Con can begin the debate. For class purposes, sides will be pre-determined and a coin flip will determine who speaks first and who gets the last speech. The format below shows two speakers on teams A and B. Each debate round will take approximately 25 minutes.

Speech	Speaker	Time
First Constructive	Speaker 1A	3 min.
Second Constructive	Speaker 1B	3 min.
Crossfire Between the First Speakers		2 min.
Third Constructive	Speaker 2A	3 min.
Fourth Constructive	Speaker 2B	3 min.
Crossfire Between the Second Speakers		2 min.
First Speaker Summary	Speaker 1A	1 min.
First Speaker Summary	Speaker 1B	1 min.
Grand Crossfire	All Speakers	2 min.
Final Focus	Speaker 2A	1 min.
Final Focus	Speaker 2B	1 min.
Prep Time	Each Team	3 min. total

Prep Time can be used before any speech except crossfire. The purpose is to give each team limited time to discuss arguments with their partners during the round.

Vocabulary

Debate can carry a pretty heavy vocabulary. The following should simplify some of the terminology you may hear in class or in the practice round. Of the three types of competitive debate, Public Forum uses the least amount debate-specific language.

Resolution: The exact wording of your topic. Good resolutions are clearly worded to imply a clear Pro and Con stance. For example: "Immigration" is not a resolution. "The USFG should pass the immigration reform bill" is a resolution.

Constructive: The speeches where you offer your main points following the basic structure we have used in class. A constructive is written word for word and includes at least one valid quote/source for every point made. A constructive includes an introduction, a "framework" weighing mechanism, your main points, and a conclusion.

Evidence: valid quotes and sources that are delivered conversationally, but written in MLA format. Sometimes referred to as a "card" which refers to the days when debaters cut and pasted their quotes on note cards.

Framework: the lens through which you would like your argument viewed. This is used to help the audience weigh your points. For example, a Con gun control case might use "Constitutionality" (the 2nd Amendment) as their framework and offer it as the highest value in the round. A "Pro" gun control case might use "Safety" as the highest value in the round.

Crossfire: The cross examination period where you and your opponent take turns asking questions. This period is one versus one. There are two types of questions: clarification and questions of exploitation to set up your future arguments. Be strategic, but polite.

Grand Crossfire: The cross examination period where all four debaters are allowed to speak.

Rebuttal: Speaking time allotted to review arguments and clarify the round. No new arguments are allowed in rebuttals. In Public Forum, rebuttals are called First Speaker Summary and Final Focus.

Clash: Aligning your arguments directly to your opponents' points. Good debates provide a lot of clash. Debates get very hard to judge when they are two teams making points but not attacking the other teams points as well. Make your points clearly, but attack every argument your opponent makes.

Dropped Argument: An argument that goes unanswered by your opponent. Dropping an argument will cause you to not be able to address it later. This is bad, very, very bad.

Flow: The note-taking technique used in debate to track all points and arguments. The flow is separated by speech for organizational purposes. The flow is used to go down each point made to provide an organized clash in debate.

Line by line: Using the flow to argue against your opponents' arguments.

Impact Calculus: Using the Summary and Final Focus rebuttal time to compare the arguments left in the round to tell the audience why some arguments should be weighed heavier in our minds than others. Good impact calculus wins rounds.

Roadmapping: Giving your audience a very basic preview of your speech. Typically: "Judge, I will be attacking our opponents case, and defending ours with the time remaining." This tells the audience you are organized.

Sign posting: Giving your audience a heads up when you change arguments. "Now on my opponents first point," is an example of sign posting. We now know where to write your upcoming response on our flow. It is very important to tell your judge where to write your arguments. If you don't, they may not write them down at all.

RFD: Reason for Decision. This is the written evaluation by the judge after the conclusion of the round. It includes notes on speaking technique and coverage of the arguments.

Prep Time: Time allotted to each team that does not count as speaking time. This time (3 minutes per team for you) is used to prepare notes for your next speech and discuss strategy with your partner. It can be used before any of your speeches. It is NOT used before an opponent's speech or before a crossfire period.

Contention: A main point or separate argument.

Claim: a general statement or point you are trying to make.

Warrant: The published expert quote that supports your claim.

Impact: The so-what factor of your claim. Impacts win debates. Explain why every claim is important. Assuming that something is important without proving the impact of it usually loses debates.

Choosing Topics

Topics, called "resolutions" in debate, will be chosen by each group. Accordingly, the side you and your partner choose to debate will also be up to you. Reach an agreement within your group as to the topic and stance to research for this project.

- Avoid one-sided or overly sensitive issues that you may not want to discuss or that would give one side a distinct advantage. Good topics have two balanced sides.
- MAKE SURE that the Pro and Con side have adequate ground to cover in the debate. You will be researching and writing a case for BOTH SIDES of the issue with your partner.
- Choose a side of a topic that you agree with, or can at least sympathize with. Do not pick a side that you absolutely disagree with. In competitive debate, you must be able to debate both sides of an issue convincingly, but for this project you will only be debating ONE TIME, so pick a side that allows you to be convincing.
- All topics must be approved by your teacher. Topics, and their presentation, must be appropriately and formally handled. Any derogatory, rude, or crude language in any form will result in an immediate failing grade.

Topic List

Topics that may not be chosen for the class debates are abortion, euthanasia, and animal testing. If you would like to choose a topic that is not on the list below, get teacher approval.

1. **Choose a partner.** Choose wisely.
2. **Choose opponents.** Choose carefully.
3. **Choose 3 topics.** Choose unanimously.
4. **Choose a stance on each.** Choose strategically.
5. **Disclose your topics to the class once you decide.** A topic may not be used more than once in each class period, hence the three topic choices.
6. **Get your topic approved by your teacher.**
7. **Brainstorm main points with your partner. Consider all angles.**
8. **Brainstorm arguments AGAINST your side.**
9. **Research both sides of the issue.** When you think you have enough, you've just gotten started.
10. **Write Your Cases.** Make back up evidence files.

Topic	Available Research	Langston's Comments
The death penalty should be banned.	Tons	Old Topic, balanced
Cell phones should be used in class.	Limited	Balanced Topic
It is the United States' responsibility to mitigate global warming.	Ample	Relevant Policy Issue
The American war on terror is reasonable and appropriate.	Tons	Older Topic, Balanced
Social networking has a positive effect on society.	Ample	Balanced, Relevant
Video game violence adversely affects children and/or society.	Ample	Balanced, Relevant
Jobs should be subcontracted (outsourced) to developing countries.	Tons	unsure of the research balance
Cloning humans or animals is ethical.	Tons	Old Topic
The high school grading system and/or standardized testing method is effective.	Not Sure	Relevant, but info may be limited
The criminal justice system is biased when it comes to celebrities.	Examples Exist on both sides, but may be limited	
Developing nuclear energy for commercial use is justified.	Tons	Balanced Topic
The government has the right to censor/monitor the internet.	Ample	Great Topic
Species depletion outweighs economic development.	Tons	Balanced, but a deep topic
The federal government should invest in alternative energy.	Tons	Topic tilted towards pro possibly
School uniforms are more effective than street clothes in schools.	Limited	Balanced with limited research
Drug testing high school athletes should be mandatory.	Limited	Older topic, still relevant
Marijuana should be legalized for recreational use.	Tons	Balanced and Relevant
Should high schools provide daycare services for students with babies?	Not sure	Interesting options
The United States should provide universal healthcare to all its citizens.	Tons	Balanced, deep topic
National Security is more important than individual freedom.	Tons	Giant topic, lots of options
The US has a responsibility to support Israel militarily.	Ample	Balanced, tilted toward pro possibly
The US should employ military options to stop Iran's nuclear pursuits.	Tons	Great Topic
The United Nations should be abolished.	Ample	Deep topic requiring deep research
Illegal immigrants should be offered a pathway to citizenship.	Tons	Good Topic
States should provide a school voucher system to improve the public school system	Ample	Relevant Topic
Assault weapons should be banned.	Tons	Older, but a Constitutional issue
The US should become energy independent.	Tons	Good points on both sides
Texting and driving should be illegal in the US.	Ample	tilted toward PRO
Genetically Modified Foods should be banned	Ample	Balanced
Industrial Agriculture is better than Organic Agriculture	Tons	Balanced GREAT TOPIC

Lesson 2: Flow a practice round. Write your RFD.

Objective: *Students will evaluate a Public Forum Debate round by flowing it and writing a RFD.*

Flow the round that is shown to your class. Write a complete RFD, then discuss your rationale with the class.

Flowing:

Use two Pieces of Paper to flow the practice round. Write PRO on one piece, CON on the other. Get as much of the outline structure as you can. Write as small as you can read clearly, using abbreviations and symbols as often as you can. Each speech will be written vertically on your paper. You will get better with practice.

Sheet 1: Pro

1st Pro	Con Response	2nd Pro	Con Response	Summary	Final Focus

Sheet 2: Con

1st Con	Pro Response	2nd Con	Pro Response	Summary	Final Focus

Writing an RFD:

Write why the team you voted for won. It needs to be based on the arguments presented in the round, without intervention by you. As a judge, you should not "intervene" by making arguments for a team that they did not make. Evaluate the round as it was debated. Your RFD should take the round issue by issue.

Lesson 3: Researching your Topic

Objective: conduct extensive research supporting your case.

Presenting and Citing Valid Sources

- **Collect more research than you need.** Find the best sources, use the best quotes. Don't consider yourself finished just because you found a few articles. The debate results will hinge on your collected research. The best researchers will win.
- **No Wikipedia**. Avoid wikis, blogs, and any information that is not attributed to an individual person as an author or any source where the source itself may become a focus for attack.
- **No plagiarism**. Avoid taking authors' words out of context or changing them in any way. This is why you provide a full source citation, to show accuracy.
- **You can shorten them in your speech**. Lengthy quotes may be shortened verbally by reading only highlighted portions, providing the entire quote is present in the case itself and the highlighted portion represents the author's intended message.
- A correctly presented piece of evidence, or "card" has 3 parts:
    - **Tagline:** a summary statement that functions like a "title" to the quote. Taglines should be impactful.
    - **Source:** an MLA formatted citation of the source. Verbally, you only need to read the author's last name and year.
    - **Quote:** directly quoted material from the article. Include enough information to show author's intent.

Minimum Research Requirements for the Constructive Speeches

*This is for speaking purposes only. See Creating a Word File for the printed file requirements.

1st Constructive Speech Evidence Requirement: *At least 3 different sources, information directly quoted and cited (author, date)*

This speech is completely pre-written for the pro and the con. It is read to the audience as persuasively as possible.

2nd Constructive Speech Evidence Requirement: *At least 3 different sources, information directly quoted and cited (author, date)*

This speech is not completely pre-written. You will base your speech on (1) how your opponents answer your points, and (2) the arguments you will need to make against their case. You will need to have research organized and available for use.

Each team is required to write both a Pro and a Con Speech. You and your partner will each write a case, one from the point of view that you will be presenting and one from the opposing view. Why? For grading equity, primarily, then to be able to have one on one debates prior to your graded debate. More information on the purpose of each speech can be found in the handout "A Guide to Public Forum Debate". There is no paper length limit for the written cases. The only limit is the amount of time that it takes you to read them: 3 minutes each. Use ALL of the allotted time.

Sample Evidence:

The following piece of evidence, sometimes called a "card" in debate, has the three components discussed on the previous page: Tag, Source, Quote.

We Should Change Our Approach to Agriculture to Address Climate Change.

Hoffman 13. Hoffman, Ulrich. United Nations Center For Trade and Development. "Agriculture at the Crossroads: Assuring food security in developing countries under the challenge of global warming." Trade and Environment Review 2013:Wake Up Before it's Too Late: MAKE AGRICULTURE TRULY SUSTAINABLE NOW FOR FOOD SECURITY IN A CHANGING CLIMATE. United Nations Publications 2013.pg 2.

Climate change has the potential to damage irreversibly the natural resource base on which agriculture depends, with grave consequences for food security. CC could also significantly constrain economic development in those developing countries that largely rely on agriculture (for more information see Lim Li Ching 2010). Therefore, meeting the dual challenge of achieving food security and other developmental co-benefits, on the one hand, and mitigating and adapting to CC, on the other, requires political commitment at the highest level for a fundamental and urgent transformation of agriculture. In fact, time is getting the most important scarcity factor in dealing with CC (Hoffman 2011).

The first speaker will read their case word for word, so your piece of evidence may sound something like this in the round:

"As Ulrich Hoffman wrote in the UN's 2013 Trade and Development Review "Wake up Before It's Too Late", "Climate change has the potential to damage irreversibly the natural resource base on which agriculture depends, with grave consequences for food security. Therefore, meeting the challenge of achieving food security and mitigating and adapting to [climate change], requires political commitment at the highest level for a fundamental and urgent transformation of agriculture. In fact, time is the most important scarcity factor in dealing with [climate change]".

Lesson 4: Writing Your Case and Evidence File

Objective: Write a Pro and Con Constructive for your resolution.

1. **Brainstorm main ideas.**
2. **Collect research, but do not limit your research only to your first ideas.**
3. **Write your cases based on the BEST evidence you can find.**
4. **Remember that you and your partner must each write a case: one pro, one con.**
5. **See Creating a Word File for what to do with your research**

The case (both Pro and Con) is written in essay format that follows the Introduction, Body, Conclusion format that we have used previously in class. Your case should focus on providing valid research for EVERY MAJOR POINT THAT YOU MAKE. Providing your opinion really doesn't carry much weight in a debate… it's all about what you can prove. When typing your research into your case, include the author's name, year of publication, and any important author qualification that sets apart your author from your opponents.

Make sure you have adequate research. Just collecting enough to write your 1st speech is not sufficient. You will need extra evidence to counter opponent arguments and to attack points that you THINK your opponents might make. Extra evidence should be organized and ready to use during the round. Extra evidence, called back up evidence, should be formatted like the above Hoffman 13 card.

DO NOT tell your opponents the main points of your case.

Form Your Arguments Correctly Within the Contentions.

Think of each of your Contentions (points that you make in the debate) as separate arguments. Each good argument has three parts, so you will need to develop each point according to the following steps.

The Toulmin Model says that good arguments:

1. Make A <u>CLAIM</u>
2. Provide a <u>WARRANT</u> (Proof) for that claim.
3. Give an <u>IMPACT</u> to that claim.

A "Claim" is just whatever point you are trying to make.

A "Warrant" is the proof that backs up that claim. Use the best expert evidence you can find to provide that proof. The quotes or stats, when valid, provide the warrant.

An "Impact" provides the "So What?!" factor to the claim. This is very important. An Impact tells us why the claim is important and should be weighed in the round. A claim made, even if warranted (proven), without impact is not a winning argument. I'll give you an example:

"Gun control is bad for American society because it limits freedom."

Assume that the debater provides a warrant for this statement in the form of a well-qualified quote. If the debater leaves the argument like this, there is no overwhelming "SO WHAT?!" factor to the argument. What is the IMPACT to limiting Freedom? Why is that bad? We make the ASSUMPTION that limiting freedom is bad. DO NOT make assumptions in

debate. You must prove that even though we live in a society with limits on our freedoms now, there is something very bad about further restriction. That is your burden to prove.

Clash: Attacking Your Opponents' Arguments

In each team's first speech, the speaker will be making the 2-4 best arguments for their side of the issue and telling the audience why we should value those arguments. In the next two speeches, there are two things that have to happen (1) the second speakers must support the points their partners made, and (2) attack every point their opponents made. These attacks are called providing "clash". If you do NOT attack a point your opponent makes, this is called "dropping" the issue and can be very harmful because the issue will then go untouched the rest of the round. Speakers cannot make new arguments in their summary speeches, so take care not to drop any arguments that your opponents make. Good clash makes for good debate.

Weigh It To Win It: Tell us why your issues are more important

To WIN the debate, a team must do more than just make good points. The speakers have to tell the audience why their points should be valued above their opponents. There are two ways this can be done in the round.

1. **Framework**- In the first speech, the speaker creates a lens through which the issue must be viewed. This gives a certain weight to the arguments that fit into this lens. For example, if the topic is universal health care, the team might say: "Today's debate must be viewed through the framework of Constitutionality." The team would then show why the Constitution must be upheld at all costs, even over competing values and impacts from their opponent's arguments because the Constitution is the thread that holds our society and its democracy together. This gives the team a way to show how their arguments should be viewed in the round: "All of our arguments support the highest law of the land. Discard any argument that does not fit this framework in today's debate." In this way, creating a framework value for your audience is like constructing a set of scales for them to place the arguments upon. You'll need to show why your framework or value is indeed the superior lens through which to view the arguments. Your opponents will have one also so be ready to debate the framework.

2. **Impacts**- As discussed above, impacts provide the "so what?" factor to your arguments. Delivering IMPACTS to your arguments keeps you from just delivering a list of good points to counter your opponent's good points. Not all impacts are created equal… some are bigger than others, some are much better, some are much, much worse. Drawing the audience attention to the comparison of the impacts in the round is called "impact calculus" because you are calculating the results for the audience. This is a must. Draw a clear picture of what the results would be. Consider "Constitutionality" versus "deficit spending". One team argues against our Constitutional framework by saying that even if universal health care is, in fact, legal, then it will just lead to more deficit spending by the government. If they leave the deficit argument like that, we would argue something like: "There is no impact to deficit spending shown in the round. Our opponents assume this is a terrible thing, but never gave an impact to weigh in the round. Maybe not ideal, but our government has operated on a deficit for years. Judge don't vote on assumptions in the face of the very clear impacts offered by us." This gives you a way to argue against them without having to say "deficit spending is good." NEVER FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE TO SAY SOMETHING THAT YOU TRULY DISAGREE WITH. Find another way to counter the argument. If the other team is arguing something common sense like "racism is bad" do not feel like you have to or should have to say that it is good. You should not. Attack them somewhere else.

Creating a Word File for your Research

Your File needs the following included.

1. Table of Contents. Lable your Main points using "Styles" Heading 1,2,3. Go to Reference Tab: Table of Contents.

2. Your Case (written out word for word)- 3 quotes and sources minimum.

3. Your back-up evidence (formatted "card style")

    a. Framework- 2 cards

    b. Contention 1- 2 cards

    c. Contention 2- 2 cards

    d. Contention 3- 2 cards

4. Your Evidence Against the Other Side. AT LEAST 1 cards for each point you make. The more the better.

5. Your opposite side case you or your partner wrote for the one vs one practice debate.

Lesson 5: Partner Practice/Anticipating their Attacks.

Objective: *conduct a practice debate for the purpose of finding the holes in your arguments and practicing effective crossfire technique.*

Conduct a one on one debate with your partner. Both people FLOW THE ROUND.

Evaluate:

The strength of your arguments

the strength of the clash you provided

Your crossfire technique

What needs to be improved before the actual debate?

Lesson 6: The Debates.

Flow every debate round.

Write RFD's for every debate.

After each round, openly discuss the results.

Public Forum Debate Rubric

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Resolution: _____

Pro Speakers	**Grade**	**Con Speakers**	

1. _____   _____

Sources	Notes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

1. _____   _____

Sources	Notes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. _____   _____

Sources	Notes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. _____   _____

Sources	Notes
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Time _____ **10 pts**

    Use within 30 seconds of allotted time

Non-Verbal _____ **25 pts**

    Eye Contact   15 pts

    Posture and Gestures   10 pts

Verbal _____ **65 pts**

    Enthusiastic and Persuasive Delivery   20 pts

    Cross Examination   20 pts

        Questioning   (10)

        Answering Questions Appropriately (10)

    Effective Summary or Final Focus   10 pts

    Evidence (3 Sources and Quotes, 5 pts. each)   15 pts

Class Vote: _____

Judge RFD: