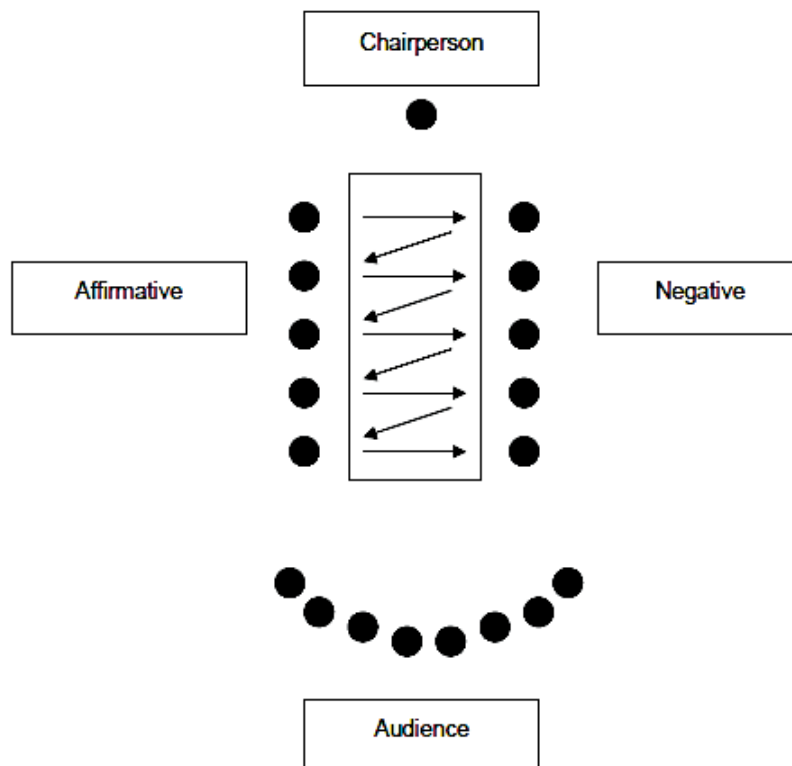


Student handout 8.2

Rules for debating

Seating arrangement

The chairperson sits at the head of the table. The two debating parties are seated opposite each other. The audience sit a short distance away from the table, and should be able to see both parties. So if necessary, additional seats for the audience should be arranged in several rows rather than behind one of the debating parties.



Order of speakers

The arrows indicate the order of speakers in the first round of the debate. In the second round, the order of speakers is simply reversed, until the first speaker for the affirmative side has spoken. Then a speaker for the negative side has the last word; the team may choose a member to give this statement – but not their first speaker, as this would give him/her a block of two minutes speaking time, which would be unfair on the other team.

Rules for the debate

1. The first speaker for the affirmative side who is sitting next to the chairperson begins. Then, as indicated by the arrows in the diagram, the first speaker for the negative side responds. In this way, the speakers for both sides speak in turn. When the last speaker for the negative side has spoken, the second round of the debate begins, this time in reverse order.
2. After the first speaker for the affirmative side has spoken, a speaker from the negative team (but not their first speaker) has the last word.
3. The order of speakers must not be changed.
4. Each speaker has a maximum time of one minute. The chairperson checks the time carefully. He/she gives a sign when the speaker has 10 seconds to go, and after speaking time is over, the speaker may finish his/her sentence and must then stop. Spare time may not be transferred to another speaker.
5. Interrupting a speaker is forbidden.
6. The audience must not participate in the debate.
7. After the debate, the audience has five minutes to share their impressions and opinions. Then they vote by a show of hands.
8. In the vote, yes and no votes are counted. The majority wins the vote.

Tips for debating speakers

1. With the exception of the first speaker for the affirmative side, spend approximately the first half of your statement to rebut an argument of the other side and then present a new point.
2. (For the first speakers.) State your motion – say what decision you want to see.
3. When you prepare for the debate, first brainstorm ideas. Then decide in which order you want to present your points, and assign them to a speaker. Begin and finish with a particularly strong and impressive point (see student handout 8.2).
4. You can repeat or vary a key argument to “hammer it home”.
5. The last speakers should sum up their side’s argument, highlighting three or four points. What should your audience keep in mind after the debate? If the debate is about a decision to be taken, make clear what your appeal to the audience is when they vote after the debate.
6. Speak freely. Don’t read your statement from any notes, but establish eye contact with your opponents and with the audience.
7. Treat your opponents with respect. Never insult a speaker, but work on his arguments.

Tips for the audience (see student handout 8.5)

1. Before the debate, try to anticipate the arguments both sides might, or should, present. This gives you a framework of reference when listening to the debate.
2. Take notes of the arguments presented by either side – in one sentence if possible.
3. Link arguments with rebuttals by lines or arrows, and enter a comment. Which argument convinced you? (Steps 2 and 3 can be shared between several listeners.)
4. Indicate which argument particularly impressed you.
5. After the debate, share your results in the group. Then vote on the motions presented by the two parties.