



UNIVERSITÀ
DI TRENTO
Dipartimento di
Lettere e Filosofia


GrACE
Green Europe:
Active Citizenship
and the Environment


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GrACE

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Debating 101

A crash course for new and intermediate debaters.

Road Map

1. What is debating?
2. Why debate?
3. What does a debate look and sound like?
4. How to debate.
5. How does a debate end?



The what and the why





But there's more...

What does a school debate look and sound like?

This House...



“This House would ban all forms of animal testing.”

“This House would legalise all drugs.”

“This House believes that social media is doing more harm than good.”

“This House believes that artificial intelligence is a threat to humanity.”

“This House believes that EU countries have a moral obligation to accept climate refugees.”

“This House believes that the ‘COP’ system has failed our environment.”

“This House endorses the increased production and subsidising of electric cars.”

“This House urges all nations to disarm their nuclear weapons.”

“This House asserts that education is *the* key to making the changes needed to save our Earth..”

“This House regrets the invention of plastic.”

“This House declares that increasing emissions are a violation of future generations’ rights.”

Two types of speech:

CONSTRUCTIVE

Task: Make a clear, positive argument for your team's case while preempting opposing points.

- 5 minutes (WSDC: 8)
- First and final minute protected.
- Mostly pre-prepared.*

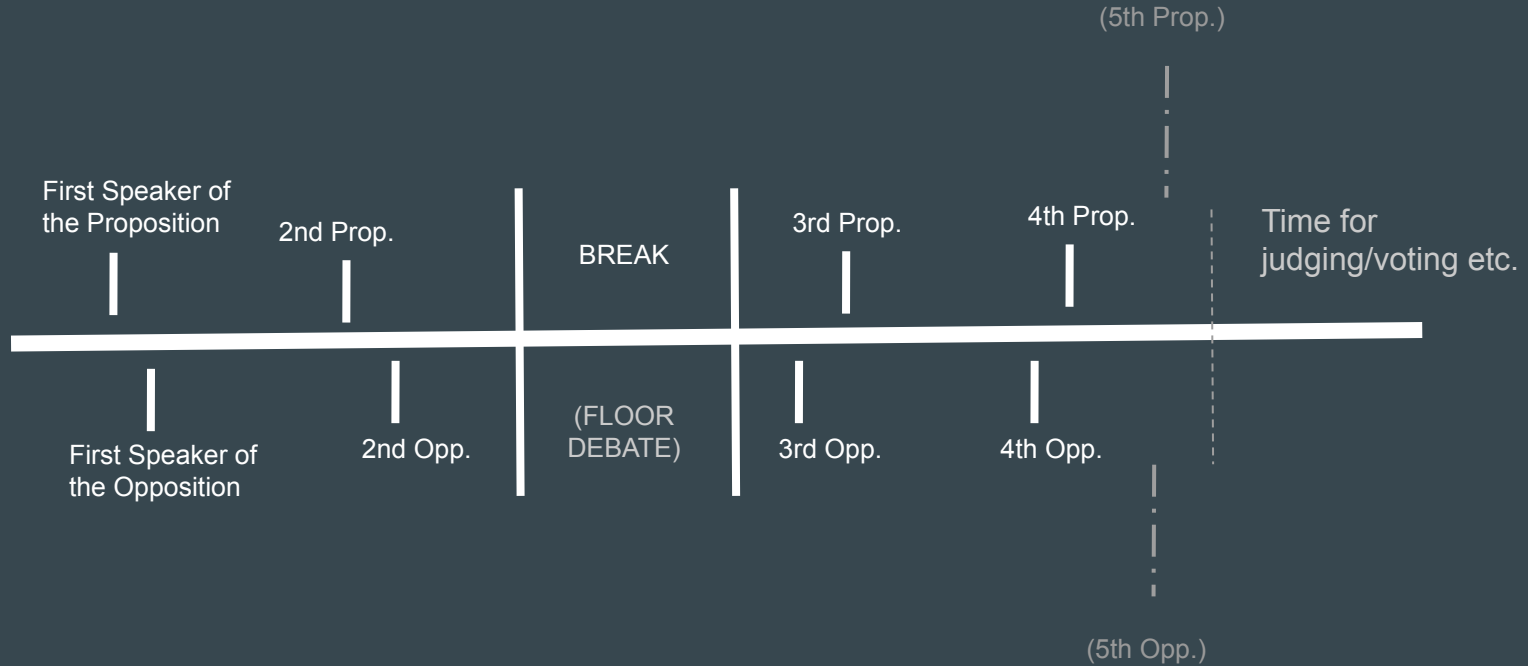
REBUTTAL

Task: Skilfully counter your opponent's arguments while underlining your own case's strengths.

- 3 minutes (WSDC: 8)
- First and final minute protected.
- Mostly impromptu.*

N.B. In teams with 5 Speakers, the fifth speaker is a pure summary speaker, speaking for 3 minutes and only outlining 1) how their team has proven their case 2) how they have disproved the others' case and 3) why they should win.

Debate Timeline



Points of Information

The iron laws of POIs

1. Each speaker **MUST** accept one.
2. The opposing team **SHOULD** offer at least two during a constructive speech.
3. The POI **MUST** be relevant to the current subject.
4. Be polite.
5. Keep it short and sharp:

“You say X is true. Then how do you account for the fact that Y has happened?”

(Recommended: 5-10 seconds, never more than 15)

Points of Order



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How to debate.



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Preparing for...

“This House would ban all forms of animal testing.”

“This House would ban all forms of animal testing.”

First 5 minutes:

Brainstorm

“This House would ban all forms of animal testing.”

Next 10 minutes:

Upload

“This House would ban all forms of animal testing.”

Next 20 minutes:

Case Development

“This House would ban all forms of animal testing.”

Next 20 minutes:

Speech Writing

“This House would ban all forms of animal testing.”

Developing an argument:

- **WHAT** is the point?

“Animals deserve more rights.”

- **WHY** is this true?

“As animals are capable of experiencing a range of emotions, from pain to loneliness, animal testing pushes us into a moral crisis: We find ourselves willing to inflict horrors on creatures that, like humans, experience them as horrible, yet even the most basic understanding of rights should seek to prevent horror upon those whose can feel it.”

- **WHEN** has this happened before?

“Indeed, Humane Society International reckon some 115 million animals are tested upon every year, which can mean everything from food and water deprivation all the way up to exposure to deadly chemicals. That is, yearly and by population, almost a whole Japan, or practically two Italys, of feeling creatures being subjected to cruel, involuntary torture under our direct or indirect orders.”

- **WHO** cares?

“Ladies and Gentlemen, our actions reflect our morality and this suggests, if we aspire to be more than just exploitative, destructive and selfish, that we should accept that our animal neighbours have a right to dignity. And if even “dignity” feels too much, let’s at the very least agree they deserve the right not to be horribly tortured.”

“This House would ban all forms of animal testing.”

A rebuttal of such an argument:

- Why is the argument UNTRUE?

“Thank you for the point but, no, I’m afraid animals do not automatically *deserve* rights. Our societies grant and take away rights from various humans for various reasons that we consider legitimate. The Proposition does not justify why we would definitively *give* animals something that, even for some humans, may come and go.”

- Why is the argument UNIMPORTANT?

“The argument that animals deserve more rights does not automatically mean that the rights need extend to medical research. For example, they could live, by many standards, better lives with more rights than even many people and still be used for testing. The one does not exclude the other.”

- Why is the argument OUTWEIGHED?

“Let’s imagine we did want to extend this right to not be involved in involuntary experiments to animals, we would then, at least in the short term, almost certainly expose human volunteers to unnecessary risks when testing treatments and products that cannot yet be tested *in silico* by digital technologies.”

“This House would ban all forms of animal testing.”

Final 5 minutes:

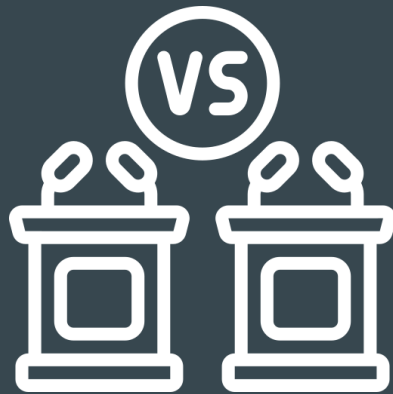
Huddle



MORE ADVANCED CONSIDERATIONS (to be be practised, step-by-step, over time):

- Defining a motion.
- Developing a model/countermodel.
- “The Split.”
- Researching a topic. (Dependent on time/format)

To the easy part.



The end of a debate.

STYLE

CONTENT

STRATEGY

LANGUAGE*





What now?

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[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/
1SJo3WvADQGw8UER2sIUQjU7z2YNC-uzt?usp=
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EXTRA MATERIALS HERE!

(And all of today's stuff, too.)



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