

Evaluating Evidence

A. Goal of the lesson

To find, analyse and evaluate evidence for the particular resolution (motion).

B. Activities

Task 1 (10 minutes)

Step 1

Teacher reminds that “evidence can be statistics (like the unemployment rate before and after a policy, or the percentage of people affected by a particular problem, or the costs of a proposal) or quotes (not direct quotes, but knowing what important people have said about an issue). But in advanced debates, evidence is most commonly presented by case study or analogy. Having an example of a similar situation or policy can be very handy if you can clearly draw the link back to the issue at hand” (Sonnreich, T.2012.,13pp). It is great if debaters have found evidence which is superior and it is difficult to debate if there is no evidence, poor evidence, misapplied or mis-tagged evidence.

An important issue is the organisation of the evidence in the process of debating as well (see: Theory)

Step 2

Teacher asks students to express their opinion about the topical problem/resolution (teacher chooses a topic). Firstly, students “focus on having the right ideas about what they need to debate, and then spend their time coming up with evidence”(Sonnreich, T.2012.,13pp).

Example resolution: *The government is/is not obliged to regulate the Media.*

Students give reasons for and against the resolution (it is up to the teacher to organise this discussion).

Examples:

The government is obliged to regulate the media, because media glorifies violence and thus sends the wrong message to the society.

The government is not obliged to regulate the media, because media only reflects what is happening in the society.

Task 2 (20 minutes)

Students are grouped (groups of two or three) and are asked to (see: the handout in Appendix) provide two or more reasons supported with evidence (one, two (or more) pieces of evidence). Both sides (for and against) of the resolution are analysed.

E.g. *The government is obliged to regulate the media, because media glorifies violence and thus the wrong message is sent. **Evidence:** School shootings. In one of the clips, the suspect says: "When you see me on the news, you'll know who I am."* (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44321469>)

Feedback (10 minutes)

Students share their findings with the entire class.

Evidence is compared, discussed and evaluated. Questions to evaluate the evidence are:

“Does the evidence match the claim/tag? Does the evidence have a credible source? (Hering, T., 2007., 14pp).

C. Preparation

Teacher prepares resolution (motion), which is topical in the society.

Teacher prepares handouts for students (see Appendix).

D. Hints

Students must have the Internet access to find out necessary evidence.

E. Verification

- 1 What is the most important students learned today?
 - 2 How important is the process of finding evidence?
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F. Theory

Oral source citation of evidence:

“In all debate events, contestants are expected to, at a minimum, orally deliver the following when introducing evidence in a debate round: primary author(s) name (last) and year of publication. Any other information such as source, author’s qualifications, etc. may be given, but is not required. Should two or more quotations be used from the same source, the author and year must be given orally only for the first piece of evidence from that source. Subsequently, only the author’s name is required. Oral citations do not substitute for the written source citation. The full written citation must be provided if requested by an opponent or judge.

Written source citation. To the extent provided by the original source, a written source citation must include:

- 1 Full name of primary author and/or editor
- 2 Publication date
- 3 Source
- 4 Title of article
- 5 Date accessed for digital evidence
- 6 Full URL, if applicable
- 7 Author qualifications
- 8 Page number(s)” (2015-2016 Debate Evidence Rules.

Available: <https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/Debate-Evidence-Rules-2015-2016.pdf>)

Organize Your Evidence

“Much of a debate is spontaneous. As one side makes an argument, the other side thinks quickly of responses and counter-arguments. These responses most often require evidence. A debater must quickly find the necessary evidence in his or her files. Typically, evidence is sorted two ways. First, the student decides whether it is affirmative, negative, or both. Of course, some evidence may be useful for both sides depending on the specific argument. If possible, the debater should label the evidence aff. for affirmative and neg. for negative. Secondly, the evidence is sorted by topic. These files will be alphabetized or otherwise grouped. When a student needs evidence on a topic, he or she will quickly go to the appropriate file and pull out what has been prepared. The following page is an Evidence Card checklist that you can use to evaluate your work. Does your evidence measure up to the following criteria?” (Hering, T., 2007., 26 pp).

Resources:

Eagan C. S. EVIDENCE AND DEBATE

Available:<https://debate.uvm.edu/NFL/rostrumlib/eviddebateegan0394.pdf>

Hering, T. (2007) *Learning Classic debate*. Available:

https://cdn4.sportngin.com/attachments/document/0108/6997/Learning_Classic_Debate.pdf

Sonnreich, T. (2012.) Monash Association of Debaters Guide to Debating.

Appendix Sheet:

Group No. _____

Write arguments for both resolutions. Focus on finding evidence!

<i>The government is obliged to regulate the Media</i>	<i>The government must not regulate the Media</i>