

## Introduction to World Schools Debating

### A. Goal of the lesson

The students explore the basics of the World Schools debate format, learning the 'what's' and 'why's' of following a specific rules in opposing viewpoints discussion.

### B. Activities

#### Lecture (30 min)

Explain the basic rules and requirements of WSD to the students. This includes, but it's not limited to:

- The necessity of critical approach
- Why debate?
- Structured vs unstructured discussion
- The goal of debating
- WSD Format rules (speakers order, time constrains etc.)
- Difference between WSD and other debate formats (reply speech, extension, POI)

Use the following materials:

A review of [world schools](#) (pg.1-15)

[Rules in WSD](#)

[Why debate?](#) (pg. 1-18)

[Video lecture](#)

Be advised, while most of the debate guides, instruction books and lesson plans have a comprehensive explanation of WSD format, they often lack explanation of the basic debate principles and their merit. This lecture should not focus on the format rules *per se*, as most beginner debaters struggle not with understanding the rules but with applying thoughtful analysis to a motion and preparing a constructive. Try to make this intro lesson more focused towards explaining the 'why's' of WSD format; for example. Why the first speech needs to have at least two distinct arguments in their constructive? Why the POI's? Why a clash point is a critical part of the format? (you can watch the video linked above for answering these questions)

As experience shows, approaching the lesson more generally will make it more fun and ease up the trainer future efforts (explaining Speaker Roles, Arguments etc.)

[A review of the need of debate and critical thinking:](#)

(We also recommend googling articles and think pieces on the benefits of argumentative discussion, the need for public speaking etc. The chosen articles strongly depend of what do you personally think is the most important benefits of debating, so I cannot provide them here)

## **Exercise (20 min)**

You can use this part to demonstrate the joy of debating. The rules of the format are easy to remember, however, this part could be used for briefly touching upon several other topics which will be explained in detail throughout the lecture. Choose one of the following exercises.

### Exercise 1:

Use ,**Bomb Shelter**' to touch upon argumentation and speaker roles.

Bomb shelter is a game where the group is presented with a scenario and based on discussion they should produce an outcome. The scenario is as follows:

A deadly asteroid is hurling towards earth, there is one bomb shelter adequately constructed and supplied to allow 2 individuals to survive the annihilation and live to rebuild society. You and your group have been chosen to select the two people who will continue humanity. *Choose wisely.*

This scenario can vary both in number of people who can fit in the shelter (for example 6 instead of 2) and the kind of individuals that can be presented to the group. *For example, you can either use different profession (engineer, chef, doctor) or a group of individuals from a selected cluster such as celebrities. Most often, celebrities are chosen because it's fun to discuss their merits and potential to save humanity. To spice up the game, give the students a ,rumor' sheet, containing the latest rumors of the group beloved celebrities. After discussing the merits of every celebrity, the group must decide who will occupy the bomb shelter.*

### Exercise 2:

Alternatively, you can use ,**Rolling Ball**" for exercising speaker order and POI's.

Rolling Ball is a game where the students pass a ball between each other and construct a case while doing it. The trainer must first divide the students between two sides, proposition and opposition. The trainer starts with giving a topic and passes the ball to a student in the proposition side. The student must express a confirmative opinion on the topic and pass the ball back to the trainer. The trainer then passes the ball to a student from the opposing side (opposition) and the student must present its opposing argument and pass the ball back to the trainer. The trainer passes the ball back to the proposition side but to a different student who cannot give a different opinion on the topic but must continue building on the opinion presented from the first speaker. The same is happening on the opposition side. The game continues on until everyone on each side had a chance to talk. If the trainers feels that the first argument is exhausted (no more substantive can be given on it), he can allow the next student to give a different opinion.

## **Mock Debate (15 min)**

Concluding the lecture, you can organize a mock debate. Find a motion and pick 6 students from the class, divide them into Proposition and Opposition sides. Let them decide the speaking arrangement. Since the students still lack knowledge in argumentation, the speeches should be no more than 1 min.

The point of this debate is that no one is moderating i.e. no one is inviting them for their speeches. The students should remember the speaking order and structure their short speeches accordingly.

### C. Preparation

-For the theoretical part read the [Introduction to WSDC Format by English Speaking Union](#):

Alternatively, you can go over some of the links above or the recommended reading below.

-Prepare slides and couple of interesting motions. You can use the following: \*:

\*always be wary to adapt the motions to the class. Different age groups read different articles and are interested in different topics.

- This house would offer additional income-support to families based on their childer educational success
- These house regrets school-children gun control campaigns
- This house believes that bike-riding should have preferential treatment in the national transportation laws
- This house would ban the use of children in political election campaigns
- This house would introduce a school subject concerned solely with the problem of overpopulation and ways for dealing with it
- This house regrets introducing free of charge higher education
- This house would censor public figures if they spread scientifically-inaccurate information on public broadcasts
- This house believes that prisons should be in private ownership
- This house would impose a 100% inheritance tax
- This house supports a bill giving rights to highly advanced artificial intelligence machines

Great visual presentation of WS format can be found [HERE](#).

An engaging TedX Talk of the benefits of debate is [HERE](#).

For the exercise, prepare some ‚rumor‘ sheets about celebrities who are known among your students. For example: give everyone a list od recent scandals from the lives of famous actors, artist, TV show hosts, politicians etc.

-For the mock debate, prepare some motions. Be careful for these motions to be relatable to the group; 12-year-olds don't have enough knowledge about the U.S. Tariff system.

## **D. Hints**

-Sometime the group of students can engage in a lively discussion of “Why we need to need to choose a side“ or ,Why settle our opposing viewpoints“. Coming to class with prepared answers on this can direct the discussion towards more favourable outcome.

-During the exercises, the students will naturally cling to battling over trivial matters. For example, in the Bomb Shelter exercise, they will start arguing who has better looks. Try to divert the group attention toward more relevant stuff, pieces of information that could make a substantive case. Returning back to the example, try to explain why looks don't matter if you could prove how that could save your life on the another planet.

-The theoretical part of the format is very simple and brief. Do not make it more complicated in the pursuit of coming out as more ,intellectual'.

-Use this ,starting' lecture to assess group dynamics. You can act accordingly in the future. In students seem bored during theory slides, add more videos and ,cool' examples in the future.

## **E. Verification**

The mock debate will reveal who paid attention during the theoretical part

Since this will be one of the first classes, asking yourself (and possibly the students) these questions could be very beneficial. Answer them in written form and share them with other trainers.

- What activity/example/discussion produce best results for this group?
- What was the biggest problem during the lesson? How can I avoid/prevent it in future?
- What goal should this group reach after the next 3 lesson?
- Can I further build on the substance presented on this lesson?

Include an activity/ exercise in the next lesson for verification. For example, start off the next lesson with a bowl of speaker positions written on paper. Let everyone draw a piece and to form teams accordingly.

















