

Learning Situation

DEBATES



Competencies

- C1-Interacts orally in English
- C2-Reinvests understanding of texts

Student's name : _____

Date : _____

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CÉA LeMoyne-D'Iberville, CSMV, August 2018*



SITUATION:

You are a student on a university debating team. Choose a controversial topic recently in the news that interests you and prepare for a debate with a partner or your teacher.

THIS LEARNING SITUATION HAS THREE (3) TASKS FOR YOU TO COMPLETE:

TASK 1: ‘The Great Debaters’

In this task, you will watch and take notes on the film ‘The Great Debaters’ and then discuss it with your teacher or a partner.

TASK 2: The candidates face off!

In this task, you will watch videos of a recent American presidential debate, take notes and then discuss it with your teacher or a partner.

TASK 3: Now let’s hear your arguments...

In this task, you will choose a topic, prepare for and then engage in a debate with a partner or your teacher.

TASK I: The Great Debaters

In 2012, the NDP's Jack Layton surprised everyone by performing extremely well in the Canadian federal election debates; then he went on to win more seats than his party had ever gained in its entire history, even though he didn't become prime minister. Everyone agreed that his excellent rhetorical performances against his opponents represented the turning point in the campaign.

Political debates play an important role in elections, with countless journalists covering and then analyzing these contests. The debate tradition has existed for centuries, providing a forum for the exchange of opinions in schools and universities as well as in the political sphere. The debate of ideas is a very challenging discipline to master.

*Watch the film, **The Great Debaters**.*

Here is the trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnezpSJwr8c>



Ask your teacher to help you watch the complete film, legally, not by live streaming.

Take notes on the film in the following rubric and then discuss your observations with your teacher or a partner:

Summarize the story	
Main characters	
Setting	
Opening situation	
Describe at least 3 debates in the film	
Conclusion	
Your opinion of the film	
Your observations about the strategies used by the debaters in the film	

TASK 2: The candidates face off!

Watch the following videos and then respond to the questions.

Here is a fake presidential debate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump that was presented on a comedy show, Saturday Night Live, in 2016:

<https://vimeo.com/185303220>



Here is a part of the real debate between the two candidates:

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/sep/27/debate-what-we-learned-clinton-trump-hofstra-recap-presidential-election>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buwUzsgiE2c>



Here is the real debate in full, if you would like to watch more of it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQFGTDFvMSc>



After listening to the fake and parts of the real presidential debate, indicate your observations in the graphic organizer below, in relation to the following points:

- Format of the debate/ Role of the moderator;
- Tone of each speaker
- Use of statistics or other proof
- Use of specific examples

Format (structure) of debate (role of moderator, etc...)		
Tone of debaters (formal, informal, calm, angry...)	<i>Trump:</i>	<i>Clinton:</i>
Debaters' use of statistics or other proof to support arguments.	<i>Trump:</i>	<i>Clinton:</i>
Use of examples of real individuals (making it human) to illustrate a point	<i>Trump:</i>	<i>Clinton:</i>
Each debater's strongest arguments	<i>Trump:</i>	<i>Clinton:</i>
Evaluate each debater from one to ten. Justify your opinion.	<i>Trump: /10</i>	<i>Clinton: /10</i>
Find one news report online about the debate and indicate 2-3 comments about each politician.	<i>Name of news source:</i> <i>Name of reporter:</i> <i>Comments about Trump:</i>	<i>Name of news source:</i> <i>Name of reporter:</i> <i>Comments about Clinton:</i>

TASK 3: Now let's hear your arguments...

You are a student on a university debating team. Choose a topic in the news that interests you and prepare for a debate with a partner or your teacher. Each person should speak for a total of from 3-5 minutes. You may choose from among the subjects listed below or find any other subject that you and your partner agree on.

Possible subjects for your debate:

- Lowering the number of immigrants allowed into the country (or province)
- Raising taxes to support government social programs
- Stricter gun control regulations
- The reinstatement of the death penalty in Canada
- Raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour
- Banning first-person shooter video games (to prevent mass killings)
- Etc...

Here are some links to other potential debate topics:

Debate Topics for the High School Classroom
<https://www.thoughtco.com/debate-topics-for-high-school-8252>



Debate Topics
<https://www.procon.org/debate-topics.php>



Before starting, take a look at this list of four tips for a good debate:

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/how-become-good-debating>



Write notes in the rubric below to help prepare:

Debate subject	
Your opinion	
Introductory words (overview)	
Main points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First point: • Second point: • Third point: • Fourth point: • Fifth point:
Use of statistics or other proof	
Use of examples of real individuals (making it human)	

Your opponent's possible counter-arguments (3) and your responses	
Concluding arguments (repeat strongest points)	