



2016-17 Teacher's Manual



Debate Mate Teacher Handbook

2016-2017 Debate Mate USA Program - Boston

Contents

1. Overview of the Program
2. Enrollment in the Program
3. Events
 - a. The Debate Mate League Inter-School Competition
 - b. The One-Day Competition (Debate Mate Cup)
4. Your University Mentor
5. Communication with Debate Mate
6. Your Role in the Club
7. Recruitment
8. Sustainability
9. Website and Social Media
10. Program Schedule
11. Guide to run your own Debate Mate Rounds



About Debate Mate USA

Debate Mate USA is a nonprofit after-school program whose mission is to empower young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and give them the skills to combat social immobility within their communities. Debate Mate trains college students to lead weekly after-school debate clubs at schools in low-income communities and teach key 21st century skills including communication, teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking. Our goal is to improve these key skills while also increasing students' confidence, self-esteem and ambition. Debate Mate USA offers an accessible way to develop these skills while also engaging young people with the world beyond their classroom and raising their aspirations and academic achievement.

Our program provides 16 weeks of after-school debating sessions, consisting of highly interactive verbal instruction and debating activities. It runs from October to April and culminates in a program-wide full-day competition at Harvard University.

1) Overview of the Program

The 2015-16 Debate Mate program consists of 16 weeks of one-hour after-school debating sessions delivered by a trained university student. It runs from October 2016 to April 2017 and is focused on middle school students in grades 5-8. The weekly after school sessions will take place at your school on a day and time of your choice. The program is split into three areas:

1. After school clubs
2. The Debate Mate league inter-school competition
3. The city-wide one day competition (The Debate Mate Cup)

For students enrolled in the program, Debate Mate aims to:

1. Develop communication, higher order thinking, leadership and teamwork skills;
2. Build confidence and self-esteem;
3. Engage young people with the world beyond the classroom, addressing issues that affect them, their communities and the wider world through an activity they enjoy;
4. Foster sustainable debating clubs in schools by empowering young people to run their own debating clubs and pass on the skills they have learned to their peers;
5. Raise pupils' aspirations and expectations through sustained contact with successful university students;
6. Increase academic achievement

A Debate Mate club must:

1. Have a minimum of 8-12 students attending each session (and we are aiming for more!);
2. Be made up of students from grades 5-8
3. Retain a majority of the same students each week;
4. Be made up of students of all abilities, not just Gifted and Talented students;



5. Attend the inter-school competitions;
6. Attend the Debate Mate Cup at the end of the program

2) Enrollment in the Program

Your Debate Mate club will take place on a day and time of your choosing. After you have enrolled, Debate Mate will send an email asking you for your preferred day and time each week. The deadline for providing Debate Mate with this information will be Thursday, October 1st.

3) Events

a) The Debate Mate League inter-school debating competition

Building off of our highly successful Debate Mate League competition last year, we will be continuing our program this year with two mid-program weeks of competition, one in February and one in March. These competitions will take place in weeks 9 and 13 of the club schedule, and will give students the opportunity to put their debating skills to the test against other schools in their local area in an after-school debating competition.

Each small competition round (of approximately 4-5 schools per day) consists of two debate rounds that are judged by university mentors from across the program. The school with the best scores across the entire city is recognized at our end-of-program Debate Mate Cup as the winners of the Debate Mate League and receives a trophy.

During the first week of the program, we put a call out for schools to host the competition round after school, after which other schools have the opportunity to sign up for a conveniently located round. We plan on having hosts confirmed four weeks in advance of each round to give schools ample time to plan.

b) The Debate Mate Cup

The Debate Mate Cup is a full day debating competition held at Harvard University and is the focal point that concludes the Debate Mate program. It is the culmination of the entire program and it is vital that your students attend. This year's Boston Debate Mate Cup will be held on Friday April 20th. Pupils who have completed the Debate Mate program are eligible to compete, and the winners will be the Boston Debate Mate Cup champions.

The tournament consists of three rounds of debating, with the two highest scoring teams from rounds one and two making their way to a final round in front of the whole delegation. We choose interesting and accessible topics for the tournament and a university student mentor judges each round.

4) Your University Mentor

You will be assigned a mentor who will contact you no later than Friday October 14th. As this is so close to the first session it is important that you respond immediately to them, and confirm the details of your club. We strongly suggest you speak to your mentor before the first session to discuss



your school/students, the program and what to expect. Your mentor will be your primary point of contact throughout the program.

We assign mentors to schools based on their availability. We will ask you which day and time suits you best, and will assign your club a mentor that can attend on that day. Unless you need it to change your club time because of extenuating circumstances or changes in scheduling, the day on which your club takes place should remain the same throughout the program, to provide continuity for the students who attend.

Your club's mentor will communicate with you independently of Debate Mate staff, primarily via email.

At Debate Mate, we train and pay our mentors to deliver debating sessions. The mentors who are recruited are only those who pass our rigorous selection criteria. They have access to comprehensive lesson plans, exercises and a range of other resources to teach debating, and are capable of delivering sessions independently. However, mentors always appreciate any advice and assistance you can offer them. They will all be CORI checked.

Last year, clubs in which mentors and teachers worked together were the most successful. If you experience any problems with your club's mentor, please contact Debate Mate immediately. We expect them to be prompt, reliable and contactable. Please let us know if they are not.

If necessary, Debate Mate will assign more mentors to your school in order to maintain a mentor-to-pupil ratio of about 1:12.

5) Communication with Debate Mate

The Program Directors at Debate Mate will always be available to help and support you with your club. We will send out regular emails with important information regarding the program. If at any point you have any questions, comments or queries you can always contact us:

Richard Weisbach, Program Director

Richard@debatebate.com

(217) 722-6972

Our Debate Mate staff will visit clubs throughout the year in order to evaluate and monitor the success of the program in our schools, as well as to support the work of our mentors. These visits are also an opportunity for us to witness each program in action and answer any questions you may have in person. We really appreciate any feedback (positive or negative) about the program, the mentors, and how Debate Mate can be improved in your school – so don't hold back!

Debate Mate will keep in contact with you throughout the program in the following ways:

1. **Email** is the main way we will stay in touch with you. Please make sure the address you provide us with is the one you check most regularly.



2. **School phone:** To follow up on issues or discuss potential events we will occasionally need to speak to you directly. Please let us know how you would prefer us to do this rather than email you, and if you have an extension number at your school.
3. **Cell Phone:** We will call your cell phone number only if we need to contact you urgently e.g. if your debating club's mentor is having problems making it to your school, or if we have been unable to contact you by other means.

6) Your Role in the Club

The more involved you are with your Debate Mate club the better it will be! In order for the Debate Mate program to have maximum impact in your schools, we rely on our teachers on the ground, and because of this, there are required levels of involvement Debate Mate needs for the program to be successful:

1. You **must** be present for the first five sessions in which the debate club is taking place;
2. From then on you need to be there for the start and end of each session, and should be around/reachable for most of the sessions;
3. Tell your mentors and Program Directors if sessions are going to be cancelled as far in advance as possible;
4. You should actively promote, recruit and ensure retention of at least 15 students by reminding the students to attend the club each week;
5. Please work with your mentor to ensure that the program is planned and run effectively;
6. You must bring (or arrange for) your students to participate in the debate showcase, inter-school competition and one-day debating competition;
7. Provide classrooms for your debate club to meet in each week (1 room per debate group);
8. We ask you to give us brief feedback midway through the program on how the club is going from your perspective;

Please feel free to join in with the exercises and lessons. We encourage you to talk to the mentor after sessions and constructively evaluate the progress of the group. As we have said, our previous clubs that were the most successful were those where the teachers got involved.

Following the end of our Boston program last year, we collected responses on the program from local teachers. The testimonials include:

"My students are so much better off in confidence, critical thinking, teamwork, and speaking ability. When we got back from the Cup, several teachers stopped me to say the kids were positively glowing with pride in their achievements. I have rarely seen them so engaged, and even my 6th graders were acting like adults. I am really impressed by everything this program has done for our students and will go to great lengths to ensure it continues." - ELA Teacher, Dorchester Collegiate Academy, Boston

"Debate Mate became the place for my students feel like they could fit and be a part of something. Many of the students who stuck with the program showed more confidence in their ability to speak and interact with their peers and teachers." - English Teacher, Susan B. Anthony Middle School, Revere



“Our students left the Debate Mate Cup feeling completely excited and elated, despite not making it to the final round. Every single one of them is planning to join the debate teams at their various high schools next year. I believe this was possibly a life-changing experience for them.” - Staff Assistant, Warren-Prescott K-8 School, Boston

7) Recruitment

Schools should aim for approximately 15-20 pupils in each club and a minimum of 8. It should be open to all students in the school and not be exclusive in any way. If there are students who wish to join later on in the program, then we welcome new recruits – our mentors will do their best to catch these students up and to ensure that they are not put at a disadvantage by having missed out on the first few weeks of the program.

We do, however, expect those present each week to be a consistent group as far as possible: the Debate Mate program is cumulative, with each week building on the last, so students should be encouraged to attend every week.

It is important to emphasize that your Debate Mate club should not simply be focused on Gifted and Talented students. We often find that those who benefit the most from debating are spread across the entire academic and behavioural spectrum.

Academic studies show that debating has a profound effect on students in a variety of ways:

1. Raising academic achievement across the board;
2. Re-engaging students in formal education;
3. Building aspirations/ self belief in students;
4. Encouraging positive behavior, and participation in class.

Based on self-reported data from the students at the end of our Boston program last year:

1. 96% of debate mate participants felt that their ability to **prepare for a discussion** had increased or greatly increased.
2. 94% of debate mate participants felt that their ability to **see more than one side of an argument** had increased or greatly increased.
3. 96% of debate mate participants felt that their ability to **speak fluently with confidence** had increased or greatly increased.
4. 94% of debate mate participants felt their ability to **make a clear and structured argument** had increased or greatly increased
5. 94% of debate mate participants felt that their ability to **work as part of a team** had increased or greatly increased.
6. 84% of all debate mate participants felt their **interest in the news current affairs or politics had increased as a result of their participation in Debate Mate**

Last year the most effective strategies for recruitment and retention were:

1. **Early Recruitment:** Starting to get students involved as early as possible



2. **Posters:** Debate Mate will send posters to you at your school before the program starts, and putting these up around the school well in advance of the first session will generate interest amongst the students
3. **Announcements in assemblies:** You will find recruitment videos on the Debate Mate website that might help with this
4. **Teachers:** Asking teachers to recommend students that they think will benefit most from the program and inviting those students specifically
5. **Prizes:** Promote Debate Mate's prize draws to help with pupil retention
6. **Responsibility:** Giving students some responsibility for recruitment and retention through elected club positions;
7. **Letters:** send Debate Mate information home to pupils and parents
8. **Notices/announcements:** provided each week in classes and homeroom.

8) Sustainability

A key aim of Debate Mate is to create sustainable debate clubs, where the students are able to develop and pass on their skills from one year to the next. With this in mind, we emphasize to our mentors that they should get the students to take on the responsibilities of running their own club, judging their own debates and giving constructive criticism and suggestions to each other. To help this process mentors will encourage students to elect their own committee. Mentors will work with new students towards the end of the 16-week teaching time to plan how they will continue the club in the summer months of class.

In June, when the mentors are no longer able to come to sessions, we hope you will be able to help the students to continue to run their own weekly debate clubs. Some successful examples of how this was achieved last year were:

- Inter-school debates (with other schools in your area)
- Inter-house debates (within your school)
- Staff vs. student debates (always draws a big crowd)
- Inviting guests to watch or judge show debates hosted by the school
- Using debating activities in normal classroom lessons (In subjects such as RE, for example)
- Teaching debate to younger students in your school
- Teaching debate in local primary schools
- Entering external competitions

It is really important to keep the momentum going even after the mentor has left the school at the end of week 16 of the programme. More details of this can be found in the **Leading Debate Mate in Your School** information sheet for students.

9) Website and Social Media

You can visit the Debate Mate website at: www.debatemateusa.com to stay up to date with debate mate news



Our Facebook page is facebook.com/debatemateusa and our Twitter account is @Debate_MateUSA.

Please encourage your students to visit our website as well as our Facebook/Twitter/other social media pages. It adds immensely to their experience of the program and what they get out of it. Your school's mentors will encourage your students to make the most of our online presence.

10) Schedule

Below is the timetable for the 2016-2017 Debate Mate Boston program. Should there be any changes, Debate Mate will inform you as soon as possible.

Please let someone at Debate Mate know if any of these dates will be a problem.

Text in bold indicates a core program week

Week Beginning	Program Week
September 5 th	First week of school
September 12 th	Teachers confirm participation and details with Debate Mate USA
September 19 th	Teachers confirm participation and details with Debate Mate USA
September 26 th	Mentor Training
October 3 rd	Mentor Training
October 10 th	Mentors get allocated and contact schools
October 17th	Launch Week
October 24th	Week 1
October 31st	Week 2
November 7th	Week 3
November 14th	Week 4
November 21 st	Thanksgiving week: No official clubs but make up clubs and official clubs at the schools discretion
November 28th	Week 5
December 5 th	Catch Up Week
December 12 th	No Clubs: Winter Break
December 19 th	No Clubs: Winter Break
January 2 nd	No Clubs: Winter Break
January 9 th	No Clubs: Winter Break
January 16 th	Make Up Week or extra clubs at the discretion of the school
January 23rd	Week 6
January 30th	Week 7
February 6th	Week 8
February 13th	Week 9: Round one of the Debate Mate League
February 20 th	No Clubs February Break
February 27th	Week 10
March 6th	Week 11
March 13th	Week 12
March 20th	Week 13: Round two of the Debate Mate League
March 27th	Week 14



April 3 rd	Week 15
April 10 th	Week 16
April 17 th	No Clubs: April Break
April 24 th	Debate Mate Cup Week. Extra clubs at discretion of school

11) How to run your own Debate Mate Style Rounds:

This guide exists in case you want to either integrate Debate Mate style debates in your classroom or you want to run clubs during weeks that mentors are not around or for whatever other purpose you see fit. If you have any questions please feel free to email Richard Weisbach at richard@debatebate.com

Key Terms

“Motion” -- The topic that is being debated in the round

“Proposition” -- The team that argues in favor of the motion

“Opposition” -- The team that argues against the motion

“Point of Information” -- a time during a speech where the opposite team has the opportunity to stand up and ask the speaker a question.

“This House Believes That” -- a statement which indicates what the proposition believes. The “this house” comes from the british parliamentary debating style that Debate Mate seeks to emulate.

Set Up

Create two teams with four students each (If you have fewer students then students can double up on speeches). Make one the proposition and one the opposition team. Then you should give each team fifteen minutes of time to prepare to debate the motion. Students who are not competing in the debate round can help the teams who are.

As students are preparing be sure to circulate to each team and make sure both are on task and that both are making headway with the arguments. If they are not feel free to ask them question such as:

What is the problem the motion seeks to solve?



Does the motion solve that problem?

Is there a better way to solve the problem than the one in the motion?

What types of people would this motion help? hurt (eg. parents, kids in school, rich people)?

Another thing that is worth clarifying with the students is that they all know which order they all will be speaking in and that they all have something to say. Sometimes students forget to do this on their own.

Once the fifteen minutes are up students should be ready to debate

Other roles: Make sure to appoint one of each of these (if there are enough students)

Timekeeper -- Keeps time for the debate and notifies debaters when their protected time is up by knocking on the table once.

Chairperson -- makes sure everyone follows the rules of the debate and calls each speaker up to speak

The actual debate

Each speaker starting with the first speaker for the proposition should get about three to five minutes (for newer debaters stick with three) to explain their argument. The first and last thirty seconds of the speech are protected meaning no students can ask points of information during that time. After the speech ends the next speaker is the first speaker for the opposition who has the same speech format as before. Then comes the second speaker for the proposition. Then the second speaker for the opposition. Then third for the proposition, then third for the opposition. Make sure that you give a few pieces of brief positive feedback after each speech

After the third speaker for the opposition you should open up the floor debate where students who are not competing should be able to ask questions or make arguments in favor of the proposition or the opposition. The floor debate should go on for about five minutes before going back to the debaters.



Finally the fourth debaters get to speak. The next speech goes to the fourth member for the opposition (note the speaking order has now changed). This speech is supposed to summarize the debate and answer any issues raised in the floor debate. The entire speech is protected meaning that debaters are not allowed to ask points of information during the speech. The speech should also be about three to five minutes long (however long the other speech was) After this speech the last member for the proposition gives a speech just like the last speaker for the opposition just gave.

After the last speaker the debate is over! feel free to bring the class together after the debate round to discuss your thoughts, the debaters thoughts, give feedback to debaters etc.

Potential Motions:

This house would place a tax on junk food

This house would get ban homework from schools

This house would ban all guns

This house would lower the voting age so middle schoolers could vote for president

This house would abolish the death penalty

This house believes everyone should be a vegetarian

This house would abolish zoos

This house would pay everyone a salary even if they did not had a job

This house believes that we should ban racist images

This house would ban all animal testing

This house would ban the sale of violent video games

This house believes the government should pay artists to make art

This house would ban cigarettes



This house believes that the United States of America should have a king and not a president

This house believes that students should never have to repeat a year of school

This house believes that the United States should make english the national language

This house would punish sports teams for the behavior of their players.

This house would let everyone in the world vote for president of the United States

This house would make everyone do one year of military service once they turn 18

This house would pay teachers more if their students did better on MCAS



Visual description of a Debate Mate Round

