



## “Change My Mind” (Modified) Lincoln-Douglas Debates

Most arguments we have been in were not formal debates, with judges taking time and making sure both individuals have opportunities to make speeches and cross-examine their opponent.

But in a formal debate, you have those features. It may take some time to learn the format and procedures of a formal debate, but once you know it, it will lead to a much more respectful and productive debate.

For this project, you and a partner will be engaging the entire class in a “Change My Mind” (Lincoln-Douglas style) debate. Each partner group will be able to select their topic and write their own bold, declarative resolution that encapsulates their topic and stance.

You will then discuss, **with a randomly paired opponent**, which resolution you’ve come up with will be used. The “owners” of the resolution will be Affirmative/Pro and the other group will be Negative/Con.

The **Affirmative side will prepare to defend their resolution** against the other group, while the Negative side will attempt to “change their mind” (and convince the audience/judges) so that they think the resolution is false, debunked, or does not stand after the round of debate.

*As two groups are debating, the rest of the class will serve as judges.  
Voting will be decided by a simple majority.*

At the conclusion of the debate, the judges will decide if the resolution is upheld, upheld **with modifications**, or if the resolution is dismissed/debunked.

Space will be provided on the Google Form for indicating which modifications are necessary for upholding the resolution--if that is the judge’s preference.

When paired with your opponents, you will work to decide on which resolution to debate between the two of you. If it cannot be solved through discussion, you will use “Rock, Paper, Scissors” best 2-of-3 OR flip a coin for best 2-of-3 to decide the “winning” resolution and (ultimately) the sides.

---

## Here's a look at the format for this debate:

### **\*4 Minute Affirmative Constructive**

-A prepared speech validating the resolution; establishes the affirmative's stance.

### *2 Minute Negative Cross-Examination*

-The negative asks for clarification, asks for repetition of certain points, and tries to set the affirmative up to admit damaging information.

### **5 Minute Negative Constructive**

-This is a two-part speech: part one builds a case for the negative and part two attacks the opponent's points.

### **\*2 Minute Affirmative Cross-Examination**

-The affirmative asks questions to the negative, trying to lead them down a path to destruction.

### \*\*\*2 Minute "Recess" / Common Prep Time

(Partners discuss and come up with a plan for the final portions of the debate)

### **NO NEW ARGUMENTS BEYOND THIS POINT**

### **\*2 Minute Affirmative Reconstructive/Rebuttal**

-Rebuild your original argument and attack the opponent's case.

### **3 Minute Negative Reconstructive/Rebuttal**

*-Rebuild, attack, and crystalize your argument. Summarize your key points and why you are right and the resolution does NOT stand.*

### **\*2 Minute Affirmative "Final Say"**

Judge deliberations: 2 minutes (Google Form)

Total: ~24 minutes for each debate

2 debates per class period, 4 on Block Day

---

**You will develop a Resolution and then determine whether you will serve as the Affirmative/Pro for your Resolution or the Negative/Con for another group's resolution.**

**The resolution should tackle something that you care about and would be willing to defend. It should also be relatively serious, warranting research that can support contentions both for and against it.**

#### **Examples:**

**Resolved:** Social media is handling inappropriate content in a responsible manner.

**Resolved:** Students ought to have a say in which books are banned or allowed.

Below, a list of resolutions you can use instead of coming up with your own will be provided from the NSDA.

Pre-selected Resolutions from the [NSDA](#) (plan to use one of these or come up with your own instead):

**WE WILL SIGN UP ON BLOCK DAY FOR RESOLUTIONS--EITHER ORIGINAL OR FROM THIS LIST.**

2021-2022

- January/February – Resolved: The appropriation of outer space by private entities is unjust.
- November/December – Resolved: A just government ought to recognize an unconditional right of workers to strike.
- September/October – Resolved: The member nations of the World Trade Organization ought to reduce intellectual property protections for medicines.

2020-2021

- Nationals – Resolved: A public health emergency justifies limiting civil liberties.
- March/April – Resolved: The United States ought to guarantee universal child care.
- January/February – Resolved: States ought to ban lethal autonomous weapons.
- November/December – Resolved: The United States ought to provide a federal jobs guarantee.
- September/October – Resolved: In a democracy, voting ought to be compulsory.

2019-2020

- Nationals – Resolved: The intergenerational accumulation of wealth is antithetical to democracy.
- March/April – Resolved: Predictive policing is unjust.
- January/February – Resolved: States ought to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.
- November/December – Resolved: The United States ought to eliminate subsidies for fossil fuels.
- September/October – Resolved: In the United States, colleges and universities ought not consider standardized tests in undergraduate admissions decisions.

2018-2019

- Nationals – Resolved: Violent revolution is a just response to political oppression.
- March/April – Resolved: The illegal use of drugs ought to be treated as a matter of public health, not of criminal justice.
- January/February – Resolved: The United States ought not provide military aid to authoritarian regimes.
- November/December – Resolved: In a democracy, the public's right to know ought to be valued above the right to privacy of candidates for public office.
- September/October – Resolved: In the United States, reporters ought to have the right to protect the identity of confidential sources.

2017-2018

- Nationals – Resolved: The United States' use of targeted killing in foreign countries is unjust.
- March/April – Resolved: The United States ought to provide a universal basic income.
- January/February- Resolved: Plea bargaining ought to be abolished in the United States criminal justice system.
- November/December – Resolved: Wealthy nations have an obligation to provide development assistance to other nations.
- September/October – Resolved: In the United States, national service ought to be compulsory.

Rough Schedule (Subject to change):

11 <b>Change My Mind</b>  Choose a partner to work with. I will record, then randomly assign pairings for this Unit.  LD Practice Assignment with a partner (or groups of 3, if some are solo)	12 Finish LD Practice Activity  Partner preference Form, determine solo-debaters.  Review Resolution options with your partner/on your own.	Even Block 13 Solidify and decide on Resolutions & AFF/NEG.	15 <b>NO SCHOOL</b>
18 Work time  Begin preparing cases--use graphic organizers	19 Work time	20 Work time  <b>Roundtable #7</b>	21 <i>END OF P7</i>  22 Practice delivery
25 Finalize your cases.  Practice delivery.  Provide PF materials (at least the overview)	26 Give teams time to finalize their work.	27 LD Debates #1-3 (maybe 4)	29 LD Debates 5 & 6
May 2nd Finish LD as needed (Debate #7)  <b>START Public Forum by this date.</b>  <b>Introduce PF materials:</b> Provide PF materials.	3 Choose partners and decide on resolutions (same process as LD unit): choose a resolution or create one to get approved by the teacher.  Start viewing a round of Public Forum.	Even Block 4 <b>Schaffner Personal Day</b>  Review case templates/graphic organizers, begin research for the case.  Matchups and schedule provided on the 6th.	<b>6</b> Assign time slots for debates.  Continue viewing the PF round.