

Debate Games/ Drills

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Speaking drills:

Speaking drills are a great way to focus a team's energy before practice. They increase speed, clarity, and get kids used to speech times. here are some fun speaking drills that can hone your teams public speaking.

1. 1 min normal speaking: for a minute, have kids speak as they would in a debate round. Its good to start and end this way so they see the immediate difference speaking can make on their speed and clarity. (All of the following drills can just as easily be done at home too)
 - 2 minutes with pen in your mouth: this drill helps stress pronunciation of words while reading. An alternative to this is the big mouth drill, where students over enunciate every word they read.
 - 2 minutes of the emotion drill: while the students are reading, call out different emotions they should act out as their reading. This helps increase a speaker's ethos and ability to effectively emote in round.
 - 2 minutes backwards drill: this is most helpful for a debater trying to increase speed. have the students read from the bottom of the page up, reading the words in a sentence backwards. This trains the eye to look for the next word while reading.
 - 2 minutes of the a drill: Have students put A (or any other fun word) in between each word. this will help students with seeing each word individually, while making sure not to muddle words together in a speech.
 - 2 minutes breathing drill: You can either, have the students take one breath in and read as long as they can in one breath or, have students hop up and down while reading (gets a little energy out and encourages proper breathing in a debate

(make up your own drills too, try to switch up the drills often to keep everyone engaged and interested)

Flowing Games:

- Flowing is one of the most boring skills in debate to learn. To help make it fun and interesting, put on some popular pg music, and have them take notes on the message of the song. make it a weekly drawing (so you can review the music beforehand). Pick out claims and warrants in the songs too, and have them mark the difference in their notes
- The best flowing practice is to have students mock judge and flow other practice rounds. It can also help for more interested debaters to start watching highschool rounds and picking out as much as they can from them.
- To illustrate the importance of using abbreviations and symbols, ask the students to flow cards that you flip from a standard deck of playing cards. Start off slowly, then increase the speed at which you read off the names of the cards.

Other team games/ drills:

- Mock “fun” debates- have mini debates about fun topics that the students chose
- cross examination drills- have partners cross ex each other/ or a coach ask questions based on arguments the team has either run in the past or that they have heard other teams run against them
- rebuttal redos- have debaters save their flows, and then have them rewrite and perform them in class
- Dancing pre round- encourage debaters to have fun before debate rounds, dance before rounds! (this is just a tip to keep pre round nerves at bay)
- Debate terms trivia- have a round of jeopardy around debate terms: uniqueness, solvency, impact, floating pic etc...
- Debate around the world (would require gym space)- play as team around the world would normally, but have them give a warrant to a given claim, if they give a warrant they can shoot.
- Make believe creature debates: Have teams of debaters make up an animal and debate in a group about whose magical animal is good. have a constructive and rebuttal for each group.
- “I couldn’t disagree more.” Gather the group in a circle. The first speaker makes a claim. The second speaker says “I couldn’t disagree more” and then gives a reason to disagree with the claim. They then make a claim of their own, rebutted by the next speaker, etc. This teaches the importance of being able to argue both sides of an issue (since they may agree with the statement they are charged with rebutting). You can focus this game by requiring claims to be associated with a particular issue/topic.
- Zombie Apocalypse. Create groups of 3-6 students. Each student should choose an occupation for themselves. The set up is that the members of the group are fleeing from the zombies that have taken over most of the town. They encounter a bunker nearly filled with others seeking shelter from the zombies. There is only enough space in the bunker for 1 additional person. Each member of the group has 1 minute to explain why

they should be chosen. Each group member then has 1 minute to explain why the others should be excluded.

- “The Worst Thing in the World” Create a tournament bracket for specific harms. Students have an impact debate weighing two harms against each other, with the “winner” moving on to the next stage of the tournament. Repeat until the “worst thing in the world” is determined.
- Triple Speak.
 - Have students brainstorm a series of random words (e.g. “Beauty” “Catfish” “Bill Gates” etc.) and write these on the board. Aim for 3 words per student. Feel free to add words yourself. Silliness is absolutely permitted.
 - Have one student come up to the front of the room with her back to the board, speaking to the class.
 - Give her a randomly selected word from the list to begin her speech. She can say anything she’d like about the word. If the word was catfish, she might tell a story about catching a catfish or make an argument that catfish are the best fish. The point is for her to keep speaking coherently and constantly on the subject.
 - Around 30 seconds into her speech (or when she seems to be slowing down or struggling), give her another randomly selected word (e.g. “Bill Gates”). She then has to try to smoothly transition her speech to the new topic. (“...so I sold the catfish for \$200, which made me the richest girl in my house, but nowhere near as rich as Bill Gates, the richest man in the world...”)
 - After 30 more seconds (or when she slows down again), give her another randomly selected word (e.g. “Beauty”). She has to try to smoothly transition her speech to this new topic and conclude the speech (e.g. “...much like catfish, Bill Gates is beautiful, and that’s what this speech is about, the ideal of beauty...”).
- 4 Corners Debate. Label the 4 corners of the room “Strongly Agree” “Agree” “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree”. Read a controversial statement. Have students go to the corner of the room that best corresponds to their reaction to the statement. Do not let them say “I don’t know” or “I don’t care” or anything similar, but pick statements that are unlikely to elicit apathetic responses. Make them practice taking a stand on an issue.
- Mascot Game. This is a good game to play on the first day of practice. Students propose a mascot for the team and give a reason why that mascot is appropriate. Introduces the idea that claims require warrants as well as gives students the agency to establish what kind of debate team they are (quirky, bloodthirsty, clever, etc.)