



Lesson 1 - Introduction to Congressional Debate

Unit Name: Congressional Debate

Topic: Introduction to Congressional Debate

Essential Questions:

1. What does Congressional Debate look like?
2. What qualities or characteristics make an excellent Congressional Debater?
3. What issues do Congressional Debaters engage with?

Objectives:

1. Students will create a list of qualities of an excellent Congressional Debater.
2. Students will identify qualities that they possess that will enable them to participate in Congressional Debate.
3. Students will generate a list of potential Congressional Debate topic.

Instructional Materials Needed: Congressional Debate videos (consider using final round videos from NSDA).

Overview of Lesson: Student will watch demonstration videos, assembling a list of qualities they observe in the debaters. Students will identify the qualities they possess, creating a narrative of success to rely on. Students will brainstorm a list of topics for Congressional Debate.

Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson:

00-05: Explain that students will be watching sample speeches from a Congressional Debate session. Have them set up their notes with the following categories: things they liked or thought were impressive; things that the speeches or speakers had in common; qualities that they think would help a debater succeed in this event.

05-25: Play sample speeches. You can pause between speeches to have students share observations, in pairs, groups, or full-class, depending on their level of comfort with one another.

25-35: Working as a class, assemble a list of qualities of excellent debaters and display the list for the class. Encourage students to relate these qualities to what they observed in the video. Also encourage students to

think about what qualities might be necessary to enable the performances they saw (curiosity, research skills, work ethic, sense of humor, etc).

35-45: Have students select three qualities from the class-generated list that they possess, then write a brief paragraph about why each quality is important to debate and important to them personally. Collect these reflections and the students' notes from the video.

Transition: We just thought about ourselves, now let's think about the world. Congressional Debate lets students pick their own topics, and also allows them to engage with a wide variety of topics at once. All the topics that are debated are modelled after legislation that the actual Congress might debate.

45-00 (or HW): Students will list three topics they think Congress might debate about. This can also be phrased as topics they'd like to debate about, which may skew slightly less rigorous, but could also generate more excitement.

Informal Assessment Strategies: Share-outs can give you a sense of which students understand what makes an excellent Congressional Debater.

Formal Assessment Strategies: Video observation notes will reveal what qualities stood out to students, and specific things they liked will give you a sense of how closely they observed. The three qualities reflection is a great way to see what students value about themselves and where their sense of efficacy comes from.



Lesson 2: Writing and Analyzing Legislation

Unit Name: Congressional Debate

Topic: Writing and Analyzing Legislation

Essential Questions:

1. What does legislation look like?
2. How can I turn my ideas into actions?
3. What makes excellent legislation?

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify and describe the three types of legislation.
2. Students will be able to produce correctly formatted, functional bills.

Instructional Materials Needed: Sample bills, resolutions, and constitutional amendments; access to digital legislation templates (<http://www.congressionaldebate.org/resources/legislation-templates>); Chapter 4 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional* (http://idebate.org/sites/live/files/Public%20Forum%20Debate_text_FINAL.pdf)

Overview of Lesson: The instructor will describe the three types of legislation, and students will take notes; the class will use topics generated in Lesson 1 to illustrate each type of legislation; instructor will lead class through the bill writing process; students will brainstorm and discuss qualities of excellent legislation.

Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson:

00-05: Explain that students will be learning about legislation, which are the topics for Congressional Debate. Emphasize how this event is unique in that students get to decide what to debate about.

05-15: Instructor should introduce each of the three types of legislation; see chapter 4 of text for explanations.

Transition: Bills make for the best debate, because they are the most tangible. We will focus on writing and analyzing good bills today.

15-25: Instructor should distribute sample bill(s); working in groups, students should analyze and annotate the bills. Instructor can model this process on a doc-cam or projection, or can provide clear annotating instructions; for instance, students can circle the new law or rule that the bill creates, place a star next to the enforcement mechanism, underline the funding if present, etc. Students should be encouraged to write questions they have about the bill right onto the page; this is a great practice for competition. If time permits, groups may brainstorm one argument in favor the bill and one argument in opposition to it.

Transition: Now that we see how a bill works, let's see what makes a bill good for debate.

25-35: Instructor should introduce concepts of debatability, uniqueness, and timeliness (pgs. 42-44 of text), and lead class discussion that identifies topics that fit each criterion; students should use topics brainstormed in Lesson 1.

35-40: Instructor should assign bill topics to groups (groups may select topics themselves, though each group should have a different topic).

40-60 (and for hw): Each group should write a bill on the topic they have been assigned; in class, groups should discuss what the bill will look like, how it will be implemented, etc; groups should conduct research to determine optimal funding and enforcement, either in class or at home; students should complete the bill for homework.

Informal Assessment Strategies: There are plenty of opportunities to guide discussion and take questions in this lesson.

Formal Assessment Strategies: Annotated bills should accurately identify regulations, funding, and enforcement mechanisms; draft bills can be reviewed before class ends, and completed versions will be submitted in the next Lesson for assessment.



Lesson 3 - Argument Construction

Unit Name: Congressional Debate

Topic: Argument Construction

Essential Questions:

1. What makes an effective argument?
2. How can an argument work with the audience's expectations?

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify and describe the components of a complete argument.
2. Students will be able to outline a complete argument.

Instructional Materials Needed: Chapter 3 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional* (http://idebate.org/sites/live/files/Public%20Forum%20Debate_text_FINAL.pdf); student generated legislation from Lesson 2.

Overview of Lesson: The instructor will describe the parts of an argument, students will take notes; the class will generate a complete argument together; students will work in groups to develop additional arguments.

Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson:

00-15: Instructor should introduce the four components of a complete argument, using Chapter 3 as a guide.

Claims - the tagline of the argument, the basic idea advanced

Warrants - the reason that the claim is true

Data - the evidence to support the warrant

Impact - the reason that the argument matters

IMPORTANT: stress the connection between the claim and warrant, and the way that a clear claim/warrant progression builds momentum for the audience.

The instructor may, by way of illustration, solicit an argument in the order listed above from the class.

15-25: Working in small groups, students should construct an argument together on a topic selected by the instructor. Instruct them to, for the purposes of this lesson, fabricate or imagine an appropriate piece of evidence for their claim and warrant pair.

25-35: Each group should share their constructed argument with the class. The class should evaluate the arguments to see if they comply with the guidelines/standards for each part of the argument.

35-60: Each group should work to generate arguments about the legislation that they generated in Lesson 2, or about legislation selected by the instructor.

Homework: Students should have three arguments on one side of one piece of legislation ready to submit at the beginning of the next lesson, using actual (not imagined) data.

Informal Assessment Strategies: The instructor should circulate during group time to check in on constructed arguments; pay particular attention to whether claim/warrant pairs develop momentum, or just repeat themselves.

Formal Assessment Strategies: The instructor will evaluate submitted arguments for completeness and coherence. The instructor may facilitate a peer-review process for generated arguments, which would allow the instructor to identify students who best understand (and are able to evaluate) the argument structure.



Lesson 4 - Speech Construction

Unit Name: Congressional Debate

Topic: Speech Construction

Essential Questions:

1. How can a speaker deliver arguments in an interesting and compelling way?
2. What makes a speech successful?

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to identify and describe the components of a congressional debate speech.
2. Students will be able to outline a complete congressional debate speech.

Instructional Materials Needed: Chapter 5 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional* (http://idebate.org/sites/live/files/Public%20Forum%20Debate_text_FINAL.pdf); student generated legislation from Lesson 2 and student generated arguments from Lesson 3.

Overview of Lesson: The instructor will describe the parts of a speech, students will take notes; the class will generate a complete speech together (producing introductions and conclusions to carry arguments); students will work in groups to develop additional speeches.

Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson:

00-15: Instructor should introduce the three sections of a complete speech, using Chapter 5 as a guide. The structure of a speech is very similar to the structure of a 5-paragraph essay.

Introductions: Should include an Attention Getting Device (AGD), a link to the topic, background information about the topic, and a thesis statement.

Body: The main ideas/arguments of the speech. Either two or three arguments.

Conclusion: Mirrors the introduction, in reverse, and often shows some change or progress in the AGD.

The instructor should stress the importance of complete transitions between sections of the speech.

The instructor may, by way of illustration, solicit a speech in the order listed above from the class.

15-25: Working in small groups, students should construct a speech together on a topic selected by the instructor. This will largely mean the students need to generate an introduction and a conclusion to bracket arguments they developed in Lesson 3.

25-35: Each group should share their constructed speech (or perhaps just the introduction and conclusion) with the class. The class should evaluate the speeches to see if they comply with the guidelines/standards established earlier.

35-60: Each group should work to generate an affirmative and a negative speech for a topic, using the legislation from Lesson 2 and the arguments from Lesson 3. Each student should be working on their own copy/outline as the speech is developed. These speeches should be submitted or shared with the instructor.

Homework: Students should have a completed speech to take home; at home, they should deliver the speech out loud at least twice and be prepared to deliver the speech in Lesson 5.

Informal Assessment Strategies: The instructor should circulate during group time to check in on constructed speeches.

Formal Assessment Strategies: The instructor will evaluate submitted speeches for completeness and coherence. The instructor may facilitate a peer-review process for generated speeches, which would allow the instructor to identify students who best understand (and are able to evaluate) the speech structure.



Lesson 5 - Delivery

Unit Name: Congressional Debate

Topic: Delivery

Essential Questions:

1. How can a speaker deliver arguments in an interesting and compelling way?
2. What makes a speech successful?

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to outline a complete congressional debate speech.
2. Students will be able to deliver a congressional debate speech.
3. Students will be able to provide feedback to a speaker on the main components of delivery.

Instructional Materials Needed: Chapter 5 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional* (http://idebate.org/sites/live/files/Public%20Forum%20Debate_text_FINAL.pdf); student generated legislation from Lesson 2 and student generated speeches from Lesson 4.

Overview of Lesson: The instructor will describe the five components of congressional debate delivery, students will take notes; students will deliver their speeches, progressing from small groups to large groups, slowly incorporating each component of delivery.

Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson:

00-10: Have students stand in a circle; focus on posture and neutral positioning: feet shoulder width, facing forward and parallel, arms and hands at side, back straight. Have students hold this posture for thirty seconds. Then add a notepad to one hand. Have students deliver (read) part of their speech into the circle, all at once.

10-20: Instructor should introduce the five components of congressional debate delivery, using Chapter 5 as a guide: Eye Contact, Tone and Speed, Moving, Gesturing, and Pad Orientation.

20-30: Working in either pairs or small groups, students should begin by reading their speeches and focusing on their tone and speed. Students can do this from a seated position.

30-40: Students should then stand and deliver their speeches again, now focusing on pad orientation and gesturing.

40-50: Students should now incorporate transitional walking/movement into their deliveries.

50-60: A volunteer may deliver their speech (now rehearsed three times in class in addition to twice at home for homework) to the whole class. Students should take notes to offer some feedback.

Homework: Students should practice their speeches again at home, focusing on whichever component of delivery gave them the most difficulty.

Informal Assessment Strategies: The instructor should circulate during group time to offer corrections and encouragement as appropriate.

Formal Assessment Strategies: Delivery skills will be assessed in the next lessons as students begin to deliver speeches to larger groups.



Lesson 6 - Flowing

Unit Name: Congressional Debate

Topic: Flowing

Essential Questions:

1. Why is listening important for debate?
2. What do high quality notes look like?

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe the components of an effective flow.
2. Students will be able to flow a congressional debate speech.

Instructional Materials Needed: Chapter 9 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional* (http://idebate.org/sites/live/files/Public%20Forum%20Debate_text_FINAL.pdf); student generated legislation from Lesson 2 and student generated speeches from Lesson 4; sample flows generated by instructor (or taken from text); congressional debate videos (<http://www.speechanddebate.org/asp/documents/MetaPage.aspx?metaid=111>) for homework.

Overview of Lesson: Class will participate in a Philosophical Lines discussion; the instructor will describe the components of flowing, students will take notes; students will flow two speeches.

Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson:

00-20: (Philosophical Chairs/Lines) Select a topic for discussion/debate, perhaps using student or class legislation. Have students arrange themselves in two lines on opposite sides of the room based on their agreement with or disagreement with the topic (affirmatives to the left, negatives to the right, for instance). Tell them they will have a brief discussion about the topic following certain rules:

- 1: A student steps forward and says one sentence why they chose the side they did, then they step back into line.
- 2: A student from the other line steps forward and *paraphrases* what the first student said, perhaps with the phrase "I understand that you think..."; after they successfully paraphrase what has been said, they say their own reason for being on their side of the issue.
- 3: A student from the original side steps forward, paraphrases the second student's argument, then says their own.
- 4: No student may speak twice until at least three other students have spoken in the interval.

Emphasize the importance of *listening* to each other, and accurately summarizing what has been said. These skills are vital for refutation.

20-35: Instructor should introduce the components of flowing: names, directionality, room for response, and concision/clarity (different color pens, for instance).

35-50: Instructor should display sample flows and ask students to identify each component.

50-60: Instructor will review the goals of flowing, particularly the linear connections between arguments.

Homework: Instructor will direct students to video of four speeches (use NSDA national final round videos); students will flow the four speeches, paying particular attention to the connection between ideas.

Informal Assessment Strategies: The lesson has plenty of opportunities to assess student involvement/answers.

Formal Assessment Strategies: Instructor should collect flows at the end of the period and can assess them for the components identified earlier.



Lesson 7 - Refutation

Unit Name: Congressional Debate

Topic: Refutation

Essential Questions:

1. Why is listening important for debate?
2. What does it mean to disprove an argument?

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe the refutation process.
2. Students will be able to refute an argument in multiple ways.
3. Students will be able to incorporate refutations into a speech.

Instructional Materials Needed: Chapter 9 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional* (http://idebate.org/sites/live/files/Public%20Forum%20Debate_text_FINAL.pdf); student generated legislation from Lesson 2 and student generated speeches from Lesson 4; flows of a debate taken in Lesson 6.

Overview of Lesson: Class will participate in a Philosophical Lines discussion; the instructor will describe the components of refutation, students will take notes; students will construct refutations; students will deliver speeches with incorporated refutations.

Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson:

00-10: (Philosophical Chairs/Lines) See Lesson 6 for overview of the Philosophical Lines activity; students should be familiar with the rules; again, emphasize the importance of listening for debate and refutation.

10-20: Instructor should introduce the four components of a refutation: Location, Summary, Response, and Impact. See Chapter 9 of text for explanation of these components.

20-30: Instructor should introduce the specific types of responses that can be made against an argument, i.e. claim or impact-level responses, warrant-specific responses, and data or evidence responses. The instructor should provide or solicit a sample argument (with a complete C/W/D/I structure), and then solicit responses to each level of the argument from the class.

30-45: Working in pairs or small groups, students should select an argument from their flows from Lesson 6 and generate responses to each level of the argument. Advanced students or groups can be asked to generate multiple responses at each level (i.e. more than one evidence challenge, more than one warrant-specific answer, etc).

45-60: Working in pairs or groups, students should deliver one or more responses generated in the previous activity, following the Location/Summary/Response/Impact model.

Homework: Option A: Students should generate multiple responses to one of their own arguments.

Option B: Students should generate responses to the responses they created in this lesson, lengthening the refutation chain.

Informal Assessment Strategies: Instructor should use this lesson as an opportunity to reinforce the C/W/D/I structure developed earlier.

Formal Assessment Strategies: Instructor should collect responses generated by each pair or group at the end of class to determine the quality and specificity of the arguments.



Lesson 8 - Questioning

Unit Name: Congressional Debate

Topic: Questioning

Essential Questions:

1. Why is listening important for debate?
2. Why do we ask questions?

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe the various goals of questioning.
2. Students will be able to craft effective questions.

Instructional Materials Needed: Chapter 8 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional* (http://idebate.org/sites/live/files/Public%20Forum%20Debate_text_FINAL.pdf); flows of a debate taken in Lesson 6, student speeches generated in Lesson 7.

Overview of Lesson: Class will participate in a Questions Only warm-up activity; instructor will overview the Communicative and Argumentative purposes of questioning; students will practice formulating effective questions; students will practice formulating effective answers.

Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson:

00-10: (Questions Only) Instructor will explain the activity: participants must carry on a conversation only speaking in questions. An example:

A: "How are you?"

B: "Who's asking?"

A: "Why are you so defensive?"

B: "Is this an interrogation?"

Neither speaker may answer any questions, unless the answer takes the form of a question; neither speaker may repeat any questions already asked.

After the instructor models with a student, students should do the activity in partnerships or small groups.

TRANSITION: Stress the importance of really listening to one another in order to move the conversation forward.

10-20: Instructor should introduce the three communicative goals of questioning, using Chapter 8 of the text as a guide: demonstrating poise, establishing control, and generating face time.

20-30: Instructor should lead class in practice of ways to display poise in questioning: controlled standing and posture (similar to speaking posture), direct address of questions, and active, visible listening. Instructor

may solicit actual questions from the students, and use them as a guide/segue to the argumentative goals of questioning.

30-40: Instructor should introduce the three argumentative goals of questioning: clarifying, challenging, and establishing.

40-60: Instructor should solicit a sample speech from a student; the class should flow the speech. Then, working in small groups or pairs, students should brainstorm three questions for each purpose (clarifying, challenging, and establishing) to ask the speaker. **OPTIONAL:** groups may write short explanations for each question, explaining how it fits a particular argumentative purpose. If time permits, have groups/pairs share out some questions, perhaps asking the instructor, to begin modelling the actual question/answer exchange.

Homework: Instructor should assign two or three bills for the entire class to prepare to debate. Students should conduct research and assemble outlines. These bills may have already been prepped/discussed in earlier lessons, or they may be new (depending on the schedule of the class).

Informal Assessment Strategies: Instructor should encourage questions throughout this lesson, and may offer commentary about different strategies already or informally deployed by students.

Formal Assessment Strategies: Instructor should collect group questions at end of class to be sure they reflect a rigorous/complete flow and to be sure they fit all three argumentative purposes.



Lesson 9 - Procedure and Presiding

Unit Name: Congressional Debate

Topic: Procedure and Presiding

Essential Questions:

1. How can we balance respect with disagreement?
2. What makes a procedure fair?

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to list the common procedural steps of a congressional debate session.
2. Students will be able to conduct procedural business.
3. Students will be able to record and determine precedence and recency.

Instructional Materials Needed: Chapter 11 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional* (http://idebate.org/sites/live/files/Public%20Forum%20Debate_text_FINAL.pdf); student generated speeches/outlines for legislation assigned at the end of Lesson 8; blank recency chart (found on page 10 here: [http://www.uiltexas.org/files/capitalconference/Witt- NFL Congress Guide.pdf](http://www.uiltexas.org/files/capitalconference/Witt-NFL_Congress_Guide.pdf))

Overview of Lesson: Class will conduct the beginning of a session with instructor guidance; instructor will overview the role of a presiding officer, students will take notes; students will conduct a presiding officer election; students will begin debate.

Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson:

00-05: (Setting the Agenda) Instructor will explain that students will need to take notes during this lesson, but will also be asked to conduct procedural business. Instructor will explain the agenda-setting process.

05-15: Students will caucus, nominate agendas, and vote on an agenda (using the legislation assigned by the instructor and prepared for by the class).

15-25: Instructor will detail the role and responsibilities of the presiding officer: timekeeping, selection procedures, managing precedence and recency. All students should be expected to maintain a recency chart during the debate; instructor should distribute blank charts.

25-30: Instructor should conduct a presiding officer election for the debate.

30-40: The elected P.O. should deliver their opening spiel, and then students should all deliver an opening spiel to partners or small groups.

40-60: Instructor should outline the procedures used during a session: speech times, questioning times, tabling and ending debate, recesses, personal privilege, and points of order or information. If time permits,

the presiding officer should call for the beginning speeches on the first agenda item. If not, debate will start in the next lesson.

Homework: Students should prepare for continued debate; they should keep their flows, as the debate will continue in Lesson 10.

Informal Assessment Strategies: The opportunities to actually use procedure serve as assessments; the class should be able to navigate the procedural challenges presented.

Formal Assessment Strategies: Instructor may collect flows or recency charts.



Lesson 10 - Synthesis Speaking

Unit Name: Congressional Debate

Topic: Synthesis Speaking

Essential Questions:

1. How can we balance respect with disagreement?
2. How can we determine what is important in a debate?

Objectives:

1. Students will be able to describe the goals of synthesis speaking.
2. Students will be able to deploy different types of argumentative weighing.
3. Students will be able to construct a synthesis speech.

Instructional Materials Needed: Chapter 10 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional* (http://idebate.org/sites/live/files/Public%20Forum%20Debate_text_FINAL.pdf); flow/legislation from already begun debate.

Overview of Lesson: Class will continue the debate from Lesson 9; after a few more cycles of debate, the instructor will describe synthesis speaking and its goals; instructor will describe different forms for synthesis speeches; students will continue the debate.

Detailed Step-by-Step Lesson:

00-20: Instructor should appoint or run an election for a new presiding officer. The new P.O. should continue the debate begun in Lesson 9 (or start the debate). Once the debate has reached at least three complete cycles (six total speeches, 3 affirmative and 3 negative), or two cycles if the debate is just starting in this lesson, the class should prepare to take notes.

20-30: Instructor should describe the importance of “fresh” speeches as a debate progresses, and then describe the goals of synthesis speaking, using Chapter 10 as a guide (Note: Chapter 10 refers to “Crystallization Speaking”, which is an artifact brought in from other events; Synthesis speaking is a more relatable name for this type of speech, and so we use it here).

30-40: Instructor should describe different possible forms for synthesis speaking, soliciting ideas from the class (who will be working off of their flow of the debate thus far) as to what arguments to cover and discuss in each form.

40-60: Students, working in small groups or pairs, should generate a synthesis speech based on the debate thus far. Time permitting, the instructor may solicit a sample synthesis speech to discuss as a class.

Homework: Students should prepare for continued debate.

Informal Assessment Strategies: Instructor may circulate in small group work to assist/monitor synthesis speaking.

Formal Assessment Strategies: Instructor may assign peer-feedback mechanisms for developed synthesis speeches.

