

Debates

Organize debates around a topic derived from the readings. Debates can be based on points raised by students in papers or in oral remarks. They can be informal and unstructured or more formal and structured:

1. Propose a motion (or have students formulate one) based on a reading and ask students to identify which side of the proposition they most support.
2. Divide students into four- to six-member teams, with half the teams assigned to one side of the argument and the other half assigned to the opposing argument. [Alternatively, divide the class into teams and judges.]
3. Explain the ground rules and give students time to assign roles and organize how they will prepare for and conduct the debate.
4. Give students time to prepare their arguments (15-30 minutes).
5. Pair teams representing opposing sides.
6. Announce and allow time to present arguments (5 min each side, 10 min total)
7. Give teams time to prepare rebuttals (10 min)
8. Announce and allow time to present rebuttals (5 min each side, 10 min total)
9. Hold a whole-class discussion to summarize the important issues and to give students the opportunity to discuss the experience of arguing opinions they do not hold.