

Debate Assignment | Rhetoric 1 | Spring 2023

Now that you have learned the foundations of Rhetoric, you will put those skills into practice by participating in a class debate over an issue that holds significant weight in your world. This document details the specific format and expectations of this assignment, which represents a large portion of your grade for quarters 3 and 4. Please print and refer back to this document often as you move through the various steps of this assignment.

Debate: The Process

Pre-debate prep:

1. Together the class will choose a topic, state a resolution, identify research questions, and choose a side to argue.
2. Every member of each side must then research the topic (see “Using the Library Database”) and prepare an Annotated Bibliography of their sources (see “The Annotated Bibliography), which is submitted for a grade.
3. A response of at least two body paragraphs answering their research question is required of each member (see “Response Expectations”). This response will be turned in for a grade.
3. Group members will meet to share their paragraphs of evidence and sources to begin to develop the team arguments.
4. Using the 5 common topics of invention, teams will create strong arguments to support their position. The group must include arguments from each of the common topics: definition, testimony, comparison, relationship, circumstance. Each team member will submit their own responses developing these common topics (turned in for a grade), which will then be shared with their team to create the final arguments. Groups must also consider the argument of the opposition so as to be prepared for the rebuttal.
5. Each group will create an outline using the debate outline template worksheet. In the outline, annotate each of the required topics of invention and the 3 appeals (ethos, pathos, logos)—by marking each in **BOLD** type. Include a proper Works Cited page with all sources used listed in MLA format (see “Outline Template”).
6. Teams must work together to generate their outline. Creating a google doc that everyone in the group can access is the responsibility of the group, with one person taking on the final formatting (to ensure proper font, spacing, outline format, etc.). Please note: all group members **MUST** take an active role in the research, writing, and creation of the arguments and the outline.
7. Each group’s outline is due Tuesday, 2/28.

During the debate:

1. Each team member will speak twice, presenting their assigned section from a thoroughly researched and pre-prepared speech, which will be submitted for a grade (see “Speech Guidelines”).
2. While the opposition is presenting their arguments, team members will be summarizing those arguments and preparing rebuttals. Bring a list of all fallacies to class to help with this process.

3. Each group will present an introduction, definition of terms, 4 arguments, a rebuttal, and closing statements. There will be break times between each round for the group to discuss/plan the rebuttal (see “Format Guidelines”).

Grading:

A specific rubric will provide details on grading. The winner of the debate will receive 5 bonus points and bragging rights.

Dates for submission are as follows:

1/12: Debate Assigned: topic, thesis, research questions, sides

1/19: Annotated bibliography of 3 research sources

(Final Rhetorical Analysis due 1/31—focus on that)

2/9: Response: Answer your research question, both for and against

2/16: Response: Common topics of example, testimony, statistics

2/23: Group Work/Debate Prep

2/28: Debate Worksheet and Outline

Q4: Debate for real; individual speech submission

Debate: Using the Library Database

JPL:

- * Follow this link: <https://jaxpubliclibrary.org/research/databases/learning-and-research>
- * Select “A-Z List of Databases”
- * Select MasterFILEPremier (EBSCO)
- * Enter your library card number (FJP _____) and password and sign in.
- * Go to Advanced Search
- * Check boxes for "Full Text," "PDF Full Text"
- * Enter search terms in box (Slavery and the U.S. Constitution, for example), click Search
- * Numbered Results list will generate, click title to view abstract (summary)
- * PDF Full Text to download to computer
- * Tool bar on left allows you to print, save, email, download, and Cite button: gives correct citation, look for MLA, copy and paste to Word doc
- * Return to list to view additional sources

Reminders:

- * Your sources must be scholarly writings (no blogs, Wikipedia, or personal web sites)
- * Look for university press publishers, authors with advanced degrees in subject area, legitimate news sources (New York Times, Wall Street Journal, etc.)

Debate: The Annotated Bibliography

Knowing your issue and understanding the arguments from BOTH sides is vital to the accomplished debater. Beginning the process by researching and evaluating evidence is the first step in this process. See “Using the Library Database” below for instruction on how to find valid sources. From there, an annotated bibliography including at least 3 strong sources—2 supporting your argument and 1 opposing it—is where you will begin.

First, what is it? An annotated bibliography is a list of citations to books, articles, and documents. Each citation is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited. Annotations are descriptive and critical; they may describe the author's point of view, authority, or clarity and appropriateness of expression.

Next, what is the process? Creating an annotated bibliography calls for the application of a variety of intellectual skills: concise exposition, succinct analysis, and informed library research.

1. Locate and record citations to books, periodicals, and documents that may contain useful information and ideas on your topic.
2. Briefly examine and review the actual items. Then choose those works that provide a variety of perspectives on your topic.
3. Cite the book, article, or document using MLA format. Write a concise annotation that summarizes the central theme and scope of the book or article. Include one or more sentences that (a) evaluate the authority or background of the author, (b) discuss how you expect this source to either support or oppose your thesis (c) explain how this work illuminates your bibliography topic.

For help determining how to evaluate your sources critically, see here:

https://guides.library.cornell.edu/critically_analyzing

For this assignment, you must have at least 3 valid sources. Two must support your team's position and the other must refute it. You will submit this as an MLA-formatted document titled Annotated Bibliography.

Example Annotated Bibliography Entry:

Waite, Linda J., et al. "Nonfamily Living and the Erosion of Traditional Family Orientations Among Young Adults." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 51, no. 4, 1986, pp. 541-554.

The authors, researchers at the Rand Corporation and Brown University, use data from the National Longitudinal Surveys of Young Women and Young Men to test their hypothesis that nonfamily living by young adults alters their attitudes, values, plans, and expectations, moving them away from their belief in traditional sex roles. They find their hypothesis strongly supported in young females, while the effects were fewer in studies of young males. Increasing the time away from parents before marrying increased individualism, self-sufficiency, and changes in attitudes about families. This will help support my thesis that traditional family roles are under attack in the modern culture.

Adapted from the Cornell University Library: <https://guides.library.cornell.edu/annotatedbibliography/home>

Note: *the document you turn in MUST mirror the above example. Your sources must be cited in proper MLA format, and your annotation must be thorough, indicating you have identified and investigated strong sources both for and against your argument.*

Debate: Response Expectations

For this response, you must provide at least two well-developed paragraphs presenting research that both affirms (paragraph 1) and negates (paragraph 2) your claim (the answer to your research question). Each paragraph should be formatted as follows:

- **T = TOPIC:** *Always* begin with a strong topic sentence. This sentence indicates what the paragraph will be about and answers the main part of the the research question, either for or against.
- **R1 = RESTRICT (aka assertion):** Use this sentence to make a claim about your topic sentence, leading to the evidence you will present. This sentence asserts something about the research question. It is less broad than the topic (restricted) and makes a specific point.
Key Terms for Restrict Sentence: In fact, In other words, In addition . . .
- **I1 = ILLUSTRATE (aka evidence):** This is where you provide a quote, a paraphrase, or a summary from the research you have investigated to prove the claim made in the “restrict” sentence. Your evidence must be properly cited, with quotes seamlessly integrated into your own writing.
- **A1 = ANALYZE (aka commentary):** In **more than one sentence**, explain how the example or quote proves the point made in the “restrict” sentence.
Key Terms for Analyze sentence: This is important because _____, The significance of this is _____ . . .
- **R2 = RESTRICT (aka assertion):** A second restrict sentence appears next, providing a second claim about your topic sentence and leading to your second provision of evidence.
- **I2 = ILLUSTRATE (aka evidence):** Your evidence for your second assertion follows, again properly cited and integrated.
- **A2 = ANALYZE (aka commentary):** In **more than one sentence**, explain how the example or quote proves the point made in the “restrict” sentence.
Key Terms for Analyze sentence: This is important because _____, The significance of this is _____ . . .
- **C = CLINCHER:** Finish with a sentence that concludes your paragraph, making connections to the larger topic

Here’s an example of a short TRIAC paragraph with just one round of [RIA] sentences. Your paragraph should follow the same pattern, with an additional [RIA] sequence following the first.

[T]Many critics worry that the way we use the Internet is reshaping our minds. [R] Their biggest concern is that our shallow-reading habits are fostering inattention and undermining literacy. [I] For example, in “Is Google Making us Stupid,” journalist Nicholas Carr worries that the connection-making state of mind promoted by slow, deep reading is giving way to an information-seeking state of mind best adapted to finding separate bits of information. In his view, instead of diving deep into the ocean of ideas, we merely “zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski” (75). [A] Carr rightly points out that our reading habits are certainly changing. It is true that much of our everyday reading feeds our information-seeking appetites. It is also true that it takes work to learn how to read and think slowly and deeply. But his insistence that we are losing our ability to think in a complex way is countered by the slow patient thinking that takes place in activities such as prayer, meditation, and scholarship. [C] While it may indeed take conscious and disciplined effort to learn how to read and think well, today’s students are capable of making that effort, provided that we recognize that, like previous generations, some may need guided practice in the habit.

Debate: Outline Template

Round 1

- I. *Introduction* (speaker #1) – 2 - 4 minutes
 - A. Creative hook – to gain attention (*exordium*)
 - B. Narrowing—ties hook to debate issue/stance
 1. Introduce topic
 2. Introduce position
 - C. Thesis
- II. Define Key Terms (speaker #2) – 2 - 4 minutes (*statement of facts/narratio*)
 - A. Using the common topic of definition, define any necessary terms
 - B. Include important background info, if needed
 - C. Preview main points of argument (*partition*)
- III. First Argument (speaker #3) – 3 - 4 minutes (*confirmation*)
 - A. Assertion #1
 1. Evidence
 2. Commentary
 3. Transition
 - B. Assertion #2
 1. Evidence
 2. Commentary
 3. Transition
 4. (continue as needed for first argument)
- IV. Second Argument (speaker #4) – 3 - 4 minutes
 - A. Assertion #1
 1. Evidence
 2. Commentary
 3. Transition
 - B. Assertion #2
 1. Evidence
 2. Commentary
 3. Transition
 4. (continue as needed for second argument)
 - C. Summarize arguments in round 1

Round 2

- I. Rebuttal (speaker #1) – 3 - 4 minutes (refutation)
 - A. Summarize opposing position
 - B. Explain why opposition is wrong, identify fallacies
 1. Evidence
 2. Commentary
 3. Transition
 4. (continue as needed for first rebuttal)
 - C. Refute with opposing evidence
 1. Evidence
 2. Commentary
 3. Transition
 4. (continue as needed for first rebuttal)
- II. Third Argument (speaker #2) – 3 - 4 minutes
 - A. Assertion #1
 1. Evidence
 2. Commentary

- 3. Transition
- B. Assertion #2
 - 1. Evidence
 - 2. Commentary
 - 3. Transition
 - 4. (continue as needed for third argument)
- III. Fourth Argument (speaker #3) – 3 - 4 minutes
 - A. Assertion #1
 - 1. Evidence
 - 2. Commentary
 - 3. Transition
 - B. Assertion #2
 - 1. Evidence
 - 2. Commentary
 - 3. Transition
 - 4. (continue as needed for fourth argument)
 - C. Summarize arguments in round 2

Closing Statements

- I. Conclusion (speaker #4) – 3 - 4 minutes (*peroratio*)
 - A. Restate thesis
 - B. Summarize argument
 - 1. Summarize key points
 - 2. Amplify the force of your argument, downplay the opposition
 - 3. Final rebuttal, if necessary
 - C. Creative, persuasive ending

Remember to annotate for common topics and appeals and **in bold** after the argument, like this: **(Comparison, Difference)** or **(Ethos)**

Debate: Speech Guidelines

Each participant in the debate essentially gives a mini-speech for his or her part in the debate. The assigned roles coordinate with the six parts of rhetorical arrangement, as indicated on the outline template above. Use the information below to review these parts, then carefully craft in writing what you will speak in debate. Identify your section in parenthetical italics at the start of your written paragraph. Submit as an MLA-formatted document to be graded. An example follows.

The *exordium* is the introduction to the speech—specifically, the “hook,” followed by a preview of what the debate is about. Your goal, as the speaker, is to catch the audience’s attention. Commonly, this is done by providing a relevant quote or story, followed by explanation of how this quote or story applies to the subject of the debate (what’s obvious to you may not be so to your audience—explain!). Finish by giving your audience a glimpse of what follows, clearly stating the persuasive goal of your team.

The *narratio*, or *statement of facts*, is just that—the key facts, definition, and brief history of the topic to be addressed. This brings background, and context to the audience’s understanding of the issue. Important items to include here are definitions, history, and facts about how this subject is important for everyday life. Ask yourself—what does my audience need to know in order to understand our side’s arguments? Is there essential background information that I can present?

The *partitio* explains the basic breakdown of what your side will discuss in the debate. Use this brief section to outline your arguments.

The main arguments are presented in the *confirmatio* sections. Effective debate teams generally start with the least important argument and finish with the most significant. In these sections, the TRIAC model should be followed, with two [RIA] sections to provide for adequate evidence and analysis. Use of the appeals and common topics is important in these sections.

The *refutatio* is presented at a specific point in the debate—following arguments 1 and 2. This is where you consider the arguments of the opposing side and refute them. Obviously you will not know what their specific statements will be until the actual debate takes place, but for your pre-debate work, a strong presentation of possible counter-arguments and how you will argue against them is expected. This is where solid research of BOTH sides of the issue is important.

The debate concludes with each side’s *peroratio*, wrapping up the arguments and reemphasizing certain points to leave the audience with a strong, concluding idea. Remember to appeal to the audience directly and with emotion—don’t just summarize. Use imagery and emphasize what’s at stake regarding your issue to create a powerful finish.

Sections from an example debate:

(*Exordium—speaker 1*) I want to tell you a story. I should warn you—it’s not a happy story, and it doesn’t have a happy ending, but it’s a story that must be told. One night, for burglars broke into Ned Alday’s trailer while he was with his father. They shot and killed both Ned and his father and continued to burglarize the house. Next, Ned’s brother Jimmy arrived at the trailer to visit his brother. They grabbed Jimmy and shot him, too—execution style. Sadly, the bloodshed didn’t end there. Soon after, Ned’s wife, his uncle, and his other brother arrived home. They shot the uncle and brother in the head and killed them. Then, they grabbed the wife

and drove her out in the woods, where they assaulted her for several hours. Finally, they shot and killed her, too. The entire Alday family was slaughtered that night.

I don't like telling stories like this. I wish with all my heart that evils like this did not exist in the world. But they do, and because they do, we cannot forget their victims, and we must judge what the proper response is to their killers. People kill for many different reasons. Some people do it in self-defense. Some people do it in the heat of the moment and are eaten up with remorse afterward. Not all murders are the same and they do not all deserve the same penalty. But for those who systematically assault their victims day after day, fully aware of what they are doing, such as those who killed the Alday family, their only regret is that they are caught. Murderers such as these are in a class by themselves and deserve a penalty in a class by itself: the death penalty. Although the death penalty should be used cautiously and thoughtfully, it is certainly a legitimate punishment. Capital punishment is the only just retribution in some cases. It deters at least some crime and incapacitates the killer from every killing again; in so doing, it saves lives. Therefore, capital punishment as it is practiced in the United States is ethical.

NOTE: the first paragraph draws in the audience with a compelling story using powerful wording. The second paragraph then tells how this relates to the topic at hand, leaving the audience no doubt as to where this is going, and finishing with the team's stand on the issue/resolution (underlined).

(Narratio and partitio—speaker 2) First, before we begin to explore the justness and deterrent effect of capital punishment, we need to understand what capital punishment is. In the United States, people can only receive the death penalty for murder, or for actions such as robbery, rape, or kidnapping that result in someone's death. Furthermore, for a person to receive the death penalty, there must be an aggravating circumstance. Typical aggravating circumstances are factors such as premeditation, cruelty, or violence against the government. This would be the case if someone murdered someone such as a police officer, judge, or witness in a case. People who are found guilty of murder actually have a separate trial to decide whether they deserve the death penalty, and it is a jury that decides this. People who receive the death penalty have many options to appeal the case and ask for different sentences, such as life without parole in prison. Because of this appeals process, it is typically ten to twelve years before someone who receives the death penalty is actually put to death. People who are put to death in the United States are executed by the gas chamber, the electric chair, or by lethal injection. Today, lethal injection is the most common execution method. I have set forth what capital punishment is and why we use it today to be clear about what the penalty we are advocating for.

My colleagues will now discuss why capital punishment is a just punishment in at least some cases involving murder. We will address the issue with three points. First, it allows for retributive justice. Second, capital punishment saves lives. Third, the death penalty is used appropriately in the United States.

NOTE: The first paragraph is the narratio, providing background and defining terms. Though there are not specific definition statements, it is clear that the speaker is setting the parameters for what is meant by capital punishment in that it defines what crimes an individual can receive the death penalty for and what steps are taken to get there. The second paragraph very briefly lays out what is to come by previewing the points that the next speakers will make.

(Confirmatio paragraphs—speakers 3, 4, 1, and 2) These should follow the TRIAC guidelines listed in the "Response Expectations," employing common topics strategies alongside strong evidence (logos). The Refutatio paragraphs should present arguments that oppose those detailed in the confirmatio, refuting those arguments and reiterating the case.

(Peroratio—speaker 4) Finally, we must continue the practice of capital punishment. We live in a world where heinous and violent crimes still occur, and often capital punishment is the only way that we can respond appropriately to these crimes. Capital punishment is a necessary social practice because it allows for retributive justice and it saves lives. In addition, research shows that we are using the death penalty justly and appropriately in the United States. Capital punishment allows us to honor lives that have been violently and unjustly ended, and it allows us to bring peace and closure where it is needed in these situations.

Speech Guidelines are adapted from *Everyday Debate & Discussion* by Shelly Johnson, PhD. Classical Academic Press, 2016. The example sections are modified and quoted from the same text.

Debate: Format Guidelines

Round 1 (30-45 minutes):

1st affirmative – Introduction– 2-4 minutes

- introduce topic and position
- preview points

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, (creative hook), The topic for our debate is... (narrowing). We believe... (state position/thesis) and plan to prove... (preview main points).

2nd affirmative – 2-4 minutes

- define key terms

We define the topic as... (explain what the topic means and define the key words in the topic. Make sure that the topic is clearly defined and explained.

3rd affirmative – 3-4 minutes

- 1st argument

Today as first speaker I will be talking to you about... (present first argument). After presenting first argument... Our second speaker will be talking about... (introduce second argument).

4th affirmative – 3-4 minutes

- 2nd argument
- summarize arguments in round 1

Our first speaker has already explained... (summarize first argument). Today I will talk to you about... (present second argument). After... So, ladies and gentlemen, to summarize our first arguments... (summarize key points in round 1).

1st negative – Introduction– 2-4 minutes

- introduce topic and position
- preview points

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, (creative hook), The topic for our debate is... (narrowing). We believe... (state position/thesis) and plan to prove... (preview main points).

2nd negative – 2-4 minutes

- define key terms

*We agree with the definition given by the affirmative **OR** We disagree with the definition given by the opposition... (explain what the topic means to your side and define key words in the topic. Make sure that the topic is clearly defined and explained.)*

3rd negative – 3-4 minutes

- 1st argument

Today as first speaker I will be talking to you about... (present first argument). After presenting first argument... Our second speaker will be talking about... (introduce second argument).

4th negative – 3-4 minutes

- 2nd argument
- summarize 1st session arguments

Our first speaker has already explained... (summarize first argument). Today I will talk to you about... (present second argument). After... So, ladies and gentlemen, to summarize our first arguments... (summarize key points in round 1).

BREAK – meet with teams (10 minutes)

- summarize opposition argument
- identify fallacies or weak logic
- prepare rebuttals

Round 2 (20-30 minutes):**1st affirmative – Rebuttal– 3-4 minutes**

- introduce rebuttal
- explain why opposition is wrong
- refute with affirmative evidence

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. The first speaker from the negative team has tried to tell you... (briefly summarize the argument of the negative). This is wrong because... (explain the problem with the opposition argument, include any fallacies).

He/she has also said... (add a second point of rebuttal, if necessary). This is wrong because... (explain the problem with the opposition argument, include any fallacies).

As our first speakers have already said... (summarize points in round 1 to reaffirm your position).

2nd affirmative – 3-4 minutes

- 3rd argument

Today as third affirmative speaker I will be talking to you about... (present first argument). After presenting your argument... Our final speaker will be talking about... (introduce final argument).

3rd affirmative – 3-4 minutes

- 4th argument
- summarize arguments in round 2

Our third speaker has already explained... (summarize third argument). Today I will talk to you about... (present final argument). After... So, ladies and gentlemen, to summarize our arguments... (summarize key points in round 2).

1st negative – Rebuttal– 3-4 minutes

- introduce rebuttal
- explain why opposition is wrong
- refute with evidence

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. The first speaker from the affirmative team has tried to tell you... (briefly summarize the argument of the affirmative). This is wrong because... (explain the problem with the opposition argument, include any fallacies).

He/she has also said... (add a second point of rebuttal, if necessary). This is wrong because... (explain the problem with the opposition argument, include any fallacies).

As our first speakers have already said... (summarize points in round 1 to reaffirm your position).

2nd negative – 3-4 minutes

- 3rd argument

Today as third negative speaker I will be talking to you about... (present first argument). After presenting your argument... Our final speaker will be talking about... (introduce final argument).

3rd negative – 3-4 minutes

- 4th argument
- summarize arguments in round 2

Our third speaker has already explained... (summarize third argument). Today I will talk to you about... (present final argument). After... So, ladies and gentlemen, to summarize our arguments... (summarize key points in round 2).

BREAK – meet with teams (3-5 minutes)

- summarize opposition argument
- identify fallacies or weak logic
- decide what to mention in closing statements

Closing Statements (6-8 minutes):

4th affirmative – closing statements (3-4 minutes)

- Restate thesis
- Summarize main points
- Amplify the force of your points and/or downplay the negative
- Creative, persuasive ending

4th negative – closing statements (3-4 minutes)

- Restate thesis
- Summarize main points
- Amplify the force of your points and/or downplay the negative
- Creative, persuasive ending