

Keep on talking

**Students debate on the European dimension
and the need of learning languages**

**Project: Keep on talking
2007-2009**

**IES Parque de Lisboa – Alcorcón (Spain)
Het Baken – Almere (The Netherlands)**

Form and content of the debates

The set up

The debates are about a case or thesis and are led by a chairperson. A jury will evaluate the debating teams. A team consists of max. 15 people. One of the jurors is also the timekeeper and will use signals; lifting one finger (1 minute left), a scissor motion (a half a minute left), counting down ten fingers (for the last 10 seconds) and finally sounding a bell closing the debate.

The lay out

The debaters will sit in rows opposite each other in the shape of the letter "V". Each team sits in two parallel rows. The chairperson and jurors sit in the open space between them closing the shape of a triangle /_\. On the side of the chairperson, between the two teams, there is a pedestal for the one-on-one debates with fixed rolls.

Two debates per round

1. The students debate with fixed rolls. Changing sides is not permitted.
2. The one-on-one debate: two debaters, one from each team has six minutes to debate a thesis. The defender of the thesis starts the debate. The chairperson will not intervene as quickly as with the other form of debate, so it is up to the debaters to grant each other the opportunity to speak.

Times

Round 1	:	12	minutes
Round 2	:	6	minutes
Jury-time	:	5	minutes

The group debate

The chairperson will open the debate. The chairperson will ask one of the defenders to open the debate. He or she will have up to two minutes to set up the debate with three main arguments. After that the debate will go back and forth. The debater who wants to speak first has to stand up. The debaters have to convince the jury and not so much each other, for that reason the debaters will address the jury directly. The chairperson has the final word over the proceedings.

The one-on-one debate

The chairperson will ask the defender to start the debate. He or she will give a brief explanation of the characteristics of the problem and his/her point of view on how to solve it. This will consist again of three main arguments, which have to be explained in two minutes. The defender as well as contender must convince the jury their arguments are the best. After two rounds the jury will retreat, fill out the evaluation forms and announce the result. This result will be handed to the contest leaders.

Length of time for speaking

The juror keeps track of the time will do so to the exact second. Time left will be signalled in the following manner:

- . two minutes before the end of the round, two fingers are raised
- . one minute to go, one finger raised
- . half a minute to go is a hand raised, horizontal with the palm of the hand downwards
- . last ten seconds is ten fingers up with a countdown
- . the debaters may go along with the count down out loud

When the last second is up the juror will sound a bell. The last speaker may finish his or her sentence and then stop.

Regulations of the debates

The debates

Two teams attempt to convince a jury, the thesis and point of view are known to the team ahead of time.

15 minutes before the debate, at the earliest the subject of the thesis will be announced.

At that time, the teams will be informed who is pro and who is con.

The teams will be informed of all the subjects at least two weeks ahead of time.

There will be two debates per round.

The first debate, the team debate, will take 12 minutes

The defenders open the debate.

The following debate, one-on-one, will take 6 minutes

Again the defender will open the debate.

All contenders will be involved in the team debate.

A pre-selected member of the team will be involved in the one-on-one debate. During the debates none of the contenders will read out pre-written text.

The teams

The teams consist of one tutor class or exchange group with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 15 members.

The defending team opens the debate (one speaker)

All members of a team conform to the given point of view, regardless of their own personal opinion.

Teams need to convince the jury and so address the jury directly.

The correct way the teams should address the jury and chairperson is as follows: "esteemed members of the jury", "honorable chairman" or "honorable chairlady"

Opponents can be named by their first name, or as "them" or "our opponents"

All team members wear nametags.

Team members are present in the assigned room five minutes before the debates commence.

The team leaders give the signed member lists to the chairperson.

Every team has a reserve team leader, just in case....

Debaters who are not on the attendance list will not be accepted.

The jury

The jury consists of three members.

The chairperson leads the debate. He or she can not be contradicted.

The chairperson will attempt to divide the time fairly between both groups.

Another juror will keep track of time.

All members award points to the teams and each declare his or her winner.

So every round has a winner.

The jury will also write down the best debaters on the score sheet.

After each debate, the subject of the next debate will be announced.

The jury will not release any of the scores!

The criteria of judging both debates are±

- 1) Arguments: force, originality and the number of argumentative points
- 2) Strategy: choice of approach, initiative, team work, counterpoints, timing
- 3) Presentation: all (non-)verbal forms of presentation and a sense of humour
- 4) Team credit: total amount of debaters participating

Jury will not go into a debate about the final scores. Complaints can be filed afterwards with the board, but the motto stays: "take every loss like a winner".