



## Social Media Debate Large Group Debate Format

The debatable issue for this project is:

**Social media makes teenagers less social.**

### Overview

This large group debate format is especially useful to introduce students to a full-scale academic debating format, since students work in large groups which allows students to take on roles that are most comfortable for them, fulfilling in this way all of the essential elements of debate. The project also has students practice making arguments and responding to arguments on a topic that they have extensive personal experience with. What most distinguishes this activity from other debate projects is that evidence and reasoning sets are provided for students from which they assemble the arguments they can use in the actual debate.

### Method and Procedure

- 1) Undertake the Argument Assembler Activity at the level of scaffolding that best suits your students. This activity should end with five fully and properly built arguments on each side of the debatable issue.



- 2) Either randomly or by canvassing preference, assign students to a side (or “position”) on the debatable issue. Then further divide each side into two groups. Identify one leader in each of the four groups.
- 3) Each group should receive copies of the Large Group Debate Counter-Argument Builder.
- 4) Group leaders should facilitate a discussion within their group about the arguments built in the Argument Assembler Activity. If the group determines that it wants to build an additional argument, the group can do that. The main purpose of this discussion, though, is to rank the arguments from 1 to 5, with one being the argument they want to make most in the debate.
- 5) The teacher should model counter-argument building, using the models provided with the resources in this project. Modeling should highlight the difference between critical counter-arguments (arguments that critique other arguments’ evidence and reasoning) and independent counter-arguments (new arguments with their own evidence and reasoning).
- 6) Group leaders should assign each student an argument from the other side of the issue (one of the five arguments built in the Argument Assembler Activity) to build counter-arguments against. These counter-arguments should either critique the evidence and reasoning of the argument (i.e., a “critical counter-argument”), or it should put forward its own evidence and reasoning (i.e., an “independent counter-argument”). The Counter-Argument Builder asks students to construct two counter-arguments for each argument that the other side might make.
- 7) The teacher should circulate through the groups, checking for understanding of the arguments and counter-argument components, and monitoring the work product.
- 8) When students have been given adequate time to prepare their arguments and (especially) their counter-arguments, the large group debate should begin. A student from one group for the affirmative side should stand and deliver their best argument. Then a student from the other affirmative group should present their best argument, as long as it isn’t the same argument as the first group.



- 9) The same process should take place with the two groups on the negative side.
- 10) The teacher should be tracking these arguments on a white board, in different-colored markers, or on an electronic flow sheet on a projector, with different colored fonts. All of the arguments in the large group debate should be flowed by the teacher.
- 11) There should be 5-minute break after the arguments from both sides are presented, during which all four groups should be refining and making final determinations about their counter-arguments. The first groups from both sides are matched for the purposes of counter-argumentation; and the second groups from both sides should be matched.
- 12) Counter-argumentation should begin with the negative groups. The first group should offer one or two counter-arguments to the first argument made by the affirmative side. The second group should do the same against the second affirmative argument. Then the affirmative groups should replicate that same process against the two arguments that the negative groups presented. Note that the affirmative should not respond to the negative counter-arguments, but instead should make counter-arguments against the negative's opening two arguments. The counter-argument speaker in each group should not be the same student who presented the opening argument.
- 13) Another 5-minute break should take place during which each group prepares final argumentation, called "argument evaluation," formally. One negative group should offer its argument evaluation, then an affirmative group, then the other negative group, and finally the last remaining group on the affirmative side.
- 14) The teacher can then provide feedback, pointing to the argument tracking that she has been doing, and/or more formal formative assessment. She can also announce a winner of the debate, with rationale. Finally, she should use the practice debate to list out what can be built on, and what can be improved, for the final debate.



## **LARGE GROUP DEBATE FORMAT**

<b>Affirmative Arguments</b>	<b>4 Minutes</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Group	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Group	
<b>Negative Arguments</b>	<b>4 Minutes</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Group	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Group	
<b>Preparation Period</b>	<b>5 Minutes</b>
<b>Negative Counter-Arguments</b>	<b>4 Minutes</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Group (Responds to 1 <sup>st</sup> Aff Group)	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Group (Responds to 2 <sup>nd</sup> Aff Group)	
<b>Affirmative Counter-Arguments</b>	<b>4 Minutes</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Group (Responds to 1 <sup>st</sup> Neg Group)	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Group (Responds to 2 <sup>nd</sup> Neg Group)	
<b>Preparation Period</b>	<b>5 Minutes</b>
<b>Argument Evaluation</b>	<b>6 Minutes</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Negative Group	
1 <sup>st</sup> Affirmative Group	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Negative Group	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Affirmative Group	