

KHaDU3A “Don’t Get Me Started” Debating

Questions to ask yourself while debating

Have you ever been involved in a debate and wondered **how to come up with more ideas**? These questions checklists will help you develop the arguments you need before, and during, a debate.

Preparation time FOR the proposition

The time you spend in the run up to a debate thinking about **your ideas** ('prep time') is absolutely crucial to your success in the debate. Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- What’s the most important reason why we should or shouldn’t do this? (E.g., is there a problem we want to solve, a link we want to break, a principle we want to uphold?)
- What are all of the other advantages and disadvantages? (E.g., it’s cheaper; it sends out a strong message, it reduces a harm, etc.)
- What are the practicalities (cost, time, staffing, getting agreement, space etc.)? (these are particularly good on the opposition for attacking their plan)
- What are the principles? (Equality, human rights, justice, liberty, freedom of choice etc.)
- Who are all of the different people who are affected by this or play a role in it? (Police, doctors, government, parents, children, teachers, the poor, developing countries, NGOs, Trans-National Corporations or TNCs etc.). Is this good or bad for them?
- Are different countries affected differently? Developing/developed; democracy/dictatorship; religious/secular, etc.
- What examples can we think of from the news recently that fit into this?
- What other examples can we think of? (avoid examples from fiction)

Generating arguments AGAINST

- Is the proposal moving us too far/fast in an area without general consensus (moral, political, cultural, technological)?
- Why now? Why should we move first?
- What is the current trend?
- Are there more pressing issues?
- Should we be dealing with this problem as part of a broader issue?
- Libertarian: Are freedoms (speech, movement, expression, trade) being infringed?
- Authoritarian: Should there be more government regulation?
- Is security at risk?
- Does the proposal tip the balance too far to one side? Is one side ignored?
- What are the international implications?
- What about accountability?
- How much will this cost? Where’s the money coming from? Who will run it? Do they have good track record?

Some Rhetorical devices

- **Rule of Three** (life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness)
- **Repetition** (Education, Education, Education; I have a dream)
- **Alliteration** (Veni, Vidi, Vici – I came, I saw, I conquered)
- **Opposites** (Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country)
- **Rhetorical Questions** (How much longer are we going to put up with this?)

KHaDU3A “Don’t Get Me Started” Debating

Rebuttal

During a debate, rebuttal is the name given to the responses by each team to their opponent's arguments. It's an exciting challenge to think on your feet in this way; these questions will help you develop your rebuttal skills.

- Have they given you enough information in their definition? (e.g. it might be relevant where something is going to happen or when or by who or how or for how long or if there are any exceptions)
- Does their definition make practical sense or can it be attacked on those grounds? (Is it too expensive, infeasible, unpopular etc?)
- Have they proved the premises of their case? (E.g. if they want to solve a problem have they proved that the problem exists, if they want to protect animal rights have they shown that animals have rights to start with etc.)
- Have they proved that their case will achieve what they want it to? (E.g. if they are worried about global warming, have they shown that their plan of congestion charging will help?)
- Have they established all of their logical links? (E.g. if they are for censoring rap because of gun crime, have they proved a link between rap and gun crime? If they want healthy eating in schools to combat obesity have they shown the link between the two?)
- Can I attack their individual arguments – benefits, principles, advantages etc.? Or do I need to show that they are irrelevant/insignificant etc.?
- Can I attack their examples? (Either by showing that they are factually wrong or by showing that they are not analogous.)
- Have they contradicted themselves or anyone else on their side?
- Have they changed the case either by making it more or less extreme than it was to start with?

Top ten style tips for persuasive speaking

- Make eye contact with your audience – let them know you’re talking to them
- Use variety – in your voice, body language and facial expressions – that way you’ll keep everyone’s attention
- Make sure your body language and tone of voice is appropriate to what you’re saying – if you’re talking about something sad don’t smile and vice versa
- Don’t move around too much – you don’t want the audience getting seasick!
- If you stand up straight with your head up and your shoulders back everyone will think you’re confident, even if you’re really feeling nervous
- Try and sound like you care about what you’re talking about – if you sound bored, your audience will be bored too
- Try and pick interesting and persuasive language – if you just say “good” and “bad” all the time it won’t be as effective as picking your words carefully.
- Try and pick examples or analogies that you think are appropriate for your audience - an example from youth culture will be more persuasive to a room of teenagers than to an older audience
- Try and have a strong opening so that you make an impression from the beginning – think in advance of a powerful way to grab the audience’s attention – and a strong closing so that you leave them on a high note
- Have a “sound bite” that everyone in your team can use a few times in their speeches e.g. in a ‘Women on the Frontline’ debate “quality is more important than equality”