

Introducing Debate through Simulation

OBJECTIVE(S)

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the basic framework of a Model UN debate
2. Learn how to express ideas within the constraints of Model UN debate
3. Gain practice in public speaking

REQUIREMENTS

Level: 5-12 Grade(s)

Time: 45 minutes - 2 hours

Materials Needed

1. Points and Motions and Flow of Debate if students have not already seen these handouts
2. Quick Reference Guide for Points and Motions
3. Charts displaying Three Types of Yields and Types of Motions
4. Placards (or blank paper to make placards)
5. Stopwatch
6. Gavel

PROCEDURE

I. Lesson Introduction/Activation of Prior Knowledge

Ask students to recall the general debate guidelines you have already discussed. Remind students why there are strict rules of debate in the United Nations. (There are 193 member nations, a massive agenda, and nothing will get done if debate is chaotic!)

II. Activity

As a class, simulate every aspect of UN debate:

1. Roll Call

- a. In this simulation, students represent themselves. Ask students to create placards using a folded sheet of paper. Students can make up countries using their names, such as "United States of Jeremy" or "Jessicastan".
- b. *Ask Students what is the purpose of using a placard.*

2. Setting the agenda

- a. This seemingly tedious part of UN debate is actually very important! Think about how many global issues the UN must face. Which should they debate first? If an issue is relegated to the end of the agenda, how long will it be before the UN passes a resolution? Obviously, each country will want their pet issue to come up first.
- b. For this simulation, come up with TWO issues that require no research and relate to students' everyday lives. *Ask the students for ideas.* For instance: "Should hats be allowed in school?" or "Should cutting class result in detention?" Now you have Topic A and Topic B.
- c. Ask students to make a motion to set the agenda. Designate two speakers for Topic A and two speakers against Topic A. Then two for Topic B and two against Topic B. They each have 30 seconds to speak on their issue. Then have the class vote on setting the agenda.

3. Formal Debate and the Speakers List

- a. This is the DEFAULT type of debate. (What is a default? Use Microsoft Word as an example - the default setting is Times New Roman, 12 point font). Delegates will always return to this if they are not in moderated or unmoderated caucus.
- b. Explain that the Speakers List allows every country to express their opinion in an orderly fashion. Delegates must be asked to be put on the speaker's list. Countries must wait their turn to speak. *Amount of time delegated for speaking is 90 seconds (or less for an introduction).*
 - i. Speeches should focus on stating the countries position and offering recommendations for action.
 - ii. Delegates can be put back on speakers list once they have addressed the committee by writing a note to the Chair.
 - iii. *During formal debate, delegates should take notes and focus on whether their country agrees with another country's policy and if they would like to draft a resolution with them later.*
- c. Ask for a motion to open a speakers list. Make sure that you set a time limit. Add names to the speakers list.
- d. Debate!
- e. In between every speaker, ask, "are there any points or motions on the floor?" REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ANY STUDENT WHO DOES NOT ADDRESS THE CHAIR USING A POINT OR MOTION!
- f. If a speaker does not use up his allotted time, explain that he can yield his time to the Chair, to points of information, or to another delegate. (see chart #3)
- g. After ten to fifteen minutes, ask students what the pros and cons of formal debate are. The cons are that formal debate limits delegates' ability to respond directly to one another. If they disagree with a delegate, they must wait their turn to respond. Introduce the idea of a moderated caucus.

4. Moderated Caucus

- a. This is one type of Informal Debate
- b. Moderated Caucus is like a classroom setting. The chair calls on delegates one at a time. The format allows delegates to immediately respond to one another.
- c. Ask for a motion to begin a moderated caucus. Be sure to set a speaking time.
- d. Debate!
- e. Periodically ask if there are any points or motions on the floor.
- f. After the debate has ended, what happens next? (Back to the DEFAULT: formal debate).

5. Unmoderated Caucus

- a. Ask delegates what the product of a UN debate should be (a RESOLUTION). How does a resolution get written? Not during active debate!
- b. Unmoderated caucuses allow delegates to go off on their own, form alliances, write working papers/resolutions/amendments.
- c. Ask for a motion to begin an unmoderated caucus. Set a time limit. Set specific goals for the unmoderated caucus.

6. Closing debate

- a. Review the ways to end a debate. Say, "Seeing that the time is 4:00, the Chair would be amenable to a motion to adjourn"

III. Closing/Wrap-Up

Ask students to recap the flow of debate. See if they can recreate the basic timeline, from roll call to closing debate. By the time the debate has finished, students will likely be exhausted - this is a long lesson! Congratulate them on their hard work!

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Future In-class Follow-Up for Teachers

Write a journal entry on their experiences with participating in the stimulation, including how they felt and what they would do differently in future stimulations.

Students can also write a one-minute speech on their country's position on an issue and practice their speech skills in front of friends and family.

Quick Reference Guide for Points and Motions

All procedural matters in committee are subject to the discretion of the Chairperson. The Chair may undertake any action that is not covered in the Rules of Procedure to facilitate the flow of debate at the conference. The following motions are in order of precedence.

<i>Motion or Point</i>	<i>Second Required</i>	<i>Debatable</i>	<i>Interrupt Speaker</i>	<i>Vote to Pass</i>	<i>Notes</i>
POINTS					
Point of Personal Privilege	No	No	Yes	None	Addresses any personal discomfort (e.g. can't hear, too hot/cold, etc..)
Point of Order	No	No	Yes	None	Addresses a procedural matter. Doesn't allow delegate to speak on topic of debate.
Point of Inquiry	No	No	No	None	Addresses any clarification of procedure needed by a delegate.
Point of Information	No	No	No	None	Addresses other delegates to ask questions in relation to speeches and draft resolutions.
MOTIONS					
Suspend Debate (Caucus)	Yes	No	No	Simple majority	Enters into informal debate. A specific length of time must be included.
Closure of Debate	Yes	2 Against	No	Two-thirds majority	Ends debate and moves into voting procedures on current topic.
Adjourn the Meeting	Yes	No	No	Simple majority	Ends the meeting for the day.
OTHER					
Right of Reply	No	No	No	None	Must be submitted in writing to the Chair. Addresses the need to rebut derogatory remarks.
Appeal the Chair's Decision	No	No	No	None	Must be submitted in writing to the Chair. Addresses what a delegate feels is an incorrect decision by the Chair.
Yields	No	No	No	None	Can be done after a delegate speaks. Can only yield to questions, another delegate, or to the Chair.