

SPAR DEBATE can be a PREP FOR WRITING

SPAR stands for **SP**ontaneous **AR**gumentation that prepares helps students



- Build confidence while engaging in public speaking
- Make arguments for and against a topic
- Ask questions about the arguments presented during a debate
- Refute arguments during a debate
- Judge the strengths of arguments presented during a debate
- Consider the strength of their position before writing a persuasive or argumentative essay.

HOW SPAR DEBATE WORKS

Select two debaters. Flip a coin. The winner of the coin flip may either: Pick the TOPIC from the list the class has prepared and choose the side s/he wishes to debate (either Affirmative or Negative) or the winner of the coin flip to choose which side he/she wants to debate (either Affirmative or Negative).

SPAR DEBATE FORMAT

Allow debaters five minutes to prepare and write down any notes they wish to use during the SPAR Debate. Select an odd number of classroom judges or take a class vote at the end of each debate to determine the winner.

Affirmative Opening Speech	2 Minutes
Cross Examination by the Negative	1 Minute
Negative Opening Speech	2 Minutes
Cross Examination by the Affirmative	1 Minutes
Affirmative Closing Speech	1 Minute
Negative Closing Speech	1 Minute

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Be organized. Have an attention getter, a quick preview of your arguments, and an rough outline of your speech—either memorized or written on a note card.

Be conscious of time. The speeches are remarkably short, and the time will go by quicker than you realize. Have a watch or timer available to gauge the time.

Be creative. Try to take unique perspectives on the debate topic. Explore the artful use of language. Think about how you can play with the definitions of words to change the meaning of the topic (for example, the topic “Dogs are better than cats” could be read as referring to pets, but could also be read as referring to people—“that guy is a *dog*” versus “that guy is a cool *cat*”).

Be calm. There is little preparation time, both before and during the debate, and the impromptu nature of the debate might make you anxious. Becoming anxious will not help! Stay calm, collect your thoughts, and remember that this exercise is designed more to introduce you to the process of debate rather than teaching you how to give the perfect speech!

Be aware of defending your own position, and answering your opponents. If the topic is “Cats are better than dogs,” then you must prove that cats are good and that dogs are bad.