

## CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE LESSON PLANS

### LESSON ONE

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What does a Congressional Debate Look like?
- What qualities or characteristics make an excellent Congressional debater?
- What are the issues discussed in Congressional Debate?

#### ACTIVITIES:

- Students will create a list of qualities of an excellent Congressional debater.
- Students will reflect upon their own strengths/qualities that will serve them well as a Congressional Debater.
- Students will generate a list of potential Congressional Debate topics.

#### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Demo Videos
  - 2017 Congress Finals – Senate
  - 2017 Congress Finals – House
- Poster Paper/Butcher Paper (or other collaborative writing space)
- Markers

#### OVERVIEW OF LESSON:

Students will watch demonstration videos, assembling a list of qualities they observe in the debaters. Students will identify the qualities they possess, creating a narrative of success on which to rely. Students will also brainstorm a list of topics for Congressional Debate.

## LESSON TWO DETAILS:

Time	Content
0:00-0:05	<p>Explain that students will be watching sample speeches from a Congressional Debate session. Divide the students into groups. Provide each group a piece of poster paper or other way of sharing notes and markers.</p> <p>Have them divide their paper into the follow categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Things They Liked / Thought Were Impressive</i></li> <li>• <i>Things the Speakers Had in Common</i></li> <li>• <i>Qualities that Make a Congressional Debater Successful</i></li> </ul>
0:05 – 0:25	Play sample speeches. Pausing between each speech to have the students process what they've seen with their group.
0:25 – 0:35	Working as a class assemble one master list of qualities of excellent/successful debaters and display the list for the class. Encourage students to relate these qualities to what they observed in the videos. Also encourage students to think about what qualities might be necessary to enable the performances they saw (curiosity, research skills, work ethic, sense of humor, etc.)
0:35 – 0:45	Have students individually select three qualities from the class-generated list that they possess, then write a brief paragraph about why each quality is important to debate and important to them personally. Monitor the students' writing to ensure that they have at least one or two qualities with which they identify.
0:45-0:50	Discuss with the students that they just considered their own strengths, and it is now time to transition their thinking to issues around the world. Congressional Debate lets students pick their own topics, and allows them to engage with a wide variety of topics at once. All the topics that are debated are modeled after legislation that the actual Congress might debate.
0:50 – 1:00	Have students brainstorm with their group topics that they think Congress would/should debate. This can also be phrased as topics <i>they</i> can debate about (which may skew slightly less rigorous, but could also generate more excitement).

## LESSON TWO

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What does legislation look like?
- How can I turn my ideas into actions?
- What makes excellent and engaging legislation?

### ACTIVITIES:

- Students will be able to identify and describe the three types of legislation.
- Students will be able to produce correctly formatted and functional legislation.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Sample Legislation from NSDA Website (a new docket comes out each month!)
- Digital Legislation Templates from NSDA website
- Chapter 4 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional Debate* (on NSDA website)

### OVERVIEW OF LESSON:

The instructor will describe the three types of legislation, and students will take notes; the class will use topics generated in Lesson 1 to illustrate each type of legislation; instructor will lead class through bill writing process; students will brainstorm and discuss qualities of excellent legislation.

**LESSON TWO DETAILS:**

Time	Content
0:00-0:05	Explain that students will be learning about legislation – basis for Congressional Debate. Emphasize how this event is unique in that students get to decide what to debate about.
0:05 – 0:15	Using Chapter 4 of the text, explain to students the differences between the three types of legislation.  [Instead of using the textbook, consider showing a clip of the webinar <i>Surviving without a Congress Coach</i> presented by Brittany Stanchik – starting at 7:45.]
0:15 – 0:25	Distribute sample bills to groups of three or four students. Have students analyze and annotate the bills. Model this process if needed. Some annotations may be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Circle the new law or rule the bill creates</li> <li>• Place a star next to the enforcement mechanism</li> <li>• Underline the funding (if present)</li> <li>• Highlight the parts you think might be “debatable”</li> </ul> Encourage students to write questions they have about the bill on to the page. If students annotate quickly challenge them to brainstorm one argument in favor of the bill and one argument in opposition.
0:25 – 0:35	Direct students to read/review the concepts of debateability, uniqueness, and timeliness (pgs. 42-44 of text), and lead class discussion that identifies which topics (that were brainstormed in Lesson 1) fit each criterion.
0:35 – 1:00	Assign or let groups select topics that students will use as inspiration for a bill. Groups should discuss what the bill will look like, how it will be implemented, etc.; groups should conduct research to determine optimal funding and enforcement.  There are two recorded webinars specifically addressing writing legislation for Congressional debate – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Writing Legislation in Congress</i> - Presented by PJ Samorian</li> <li>• <i>Writing Effective Legislation</i> - Presented by Jeff Hannan</li> </ul>

## LESSON THREE

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- What makes an effective argument?
- How can an argument work with the audience's expectations?

### ACTIVITIES:

- Students will be able to identify and describe the components of a complete argument.
- Students will be able to outline a complete argument.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Chapter 3 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional Debate*
- Student generated legislation from Lesson 2

### OVERVIEW OF LESSON:

The instructor will describe the parts of an argument, the students will take notes; the class will generate a complete argument as a group; students will work in groups to develop additional arguments.

### LESSON THREE DETAILS:

Time	Content
0:00 – 0:15	<p>Introduce the four components of a complete argument using Chapter 3 as a guide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Claim – the tagline of the argument, the basic idea</li> <li>• Warrants – the reason that the claim is true</li> <li>• Data – evidence to support the warrant</li> <li>• Impact – the reason that the argument matters</li> </ul> <p>Stress the connection between the claim and the warrant, and the way that a clear claim/warrant progression builds momentum for the audience.</p>
0:15 – 0:25	<p>Working in small groups, students should construct an argument together on a topic selected by the instructor. Instruct them to – <i>for the purposes of this lesson</i> – fabricate or imagine an appropriate piece of evidence for their claim and warrant pair.</p>
0:25 – 0:35	<p>Each group should share their constructed argument with the class. The class should evaluate the arguments to see if they comply with the guidelines/standards for each part of the argument.</p>
0:35 – 1:00	<p>Each group should work to generate arguments about the legislation they wrote in Lesson 2 (or about legislation selected by the instructor).</p>

## LESSON FOUR

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can a speaker deliver arguments in an interesting and compelling way?
- What makes a speech successful?

### ACTIVITIES:

- Students will identify and describe the components of a Congressional Debate speech.
- Students will outline a complete Congressional Debate Speech

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Chapter 5 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional Debate*
- Student Generated Legislation from Lessons 2 and 3

### OVERVIEW OF LESSON:

The instructor will describe parts of a Congressional Debate speech, students will take notes; the class will generate a complete speech together (producing introductions and conclusions to carry arguments); students will work in groups to develop additional speeches.

### LESSON FOUR DETAILS:

Time	Content
0:00 – 0:15	<p>Introduce students to the three sections of a complete speech, using Chapter 5 as a guide. The structure of a speech is very similar to a 5-paragraph essay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions: Should include an Attention Getting Device (AGD), a link to the topic, background information about the topic, and a thesis statement.</li> <li>• Body: The main ideas/arguments of the speech. Either two or three arguments.</li> <li>• Conclusion: Mirrors the introduction, in reverse, and often shows some change or progress in the AGD.</li> </ul>
0:15 – 0:25	<p>Working in small groups, students should construct a speech together on a topic selected by the instructor. This will largely mean the students need to generate an introduction and a conclusion to bracket the arguments they made in Lesson 3.</p>
0:25- 0: 35	<p>Each group should share their constructed speech (or perhaps just the introduction and conclusion) with the class. The class should evaluate the speeches to see if they comply with the guidelines/standards established earlier.</p>
0:35 – 1:00	<p>Each group should work to generate an affirmative and a negative speech for each topic, using legislation from Lesson 2 and the arguments from Lesson 3.</p>



## LESSON FIVE

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can a speaker deliver arguments in an interesting and compelling way?
- What makes a successful speech?

### ACTIVITIES:

- Students will outline a complete Congressional Debate speech.
- Students will deliver a Congressional Speech.
- Students will provide feedback to a speaker on the main components of delivery.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Chapter 5 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional Debate*
- Student Generated Legislation from Lessons 2 and 3

### OVERVIEW OF LESSON:

The instructor will describe the five components of Congressional Debate delivery, students will take notes; students will deliver speeches, progressing from small groups to large groups, slowly incorporating each component of delivery.

### LESSON FIVE DETAILS:

Time	Content
0:00 – 0:10	Have student stand in a circle; focus on posture and neutral positioning: feel shoulder width, facing forward and parallel, arms and hands at side, back straight. Have students hold this posture for thirty seconds. Then add a note to one hand. Have students deliver (read) part of their speech into the circle, all at once.
0:10 – 0:20	Instructor should introduce the five components of Congressional Debate delivery, using Chapter 5 as a guide: Eye Contact, Tone and Speed, Moving, Gesturing, and Pad Orientation.
0:20 – 0:30	Working in either pairs or in small groups, student should begin by reading their speeches and focusing on their tone and speed. Students can do this from a seated position.
0:30 – 0:40	Students should then stand and deliver their speeches again, now focusing on pad orientation and gesturing.
0:40 – 0:50	Students should not incorporate transitional walking/movement into their deliveries.
0:50 – 1:00	A volunteer may deliver their speech (now rehearsed three times in class) to the whole class. Students should take notes to offer some feedback.

## LESSON SIX

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why is listening important for debate?
- What do high quality notes look like?

### ACTIVITIES:

- Students will describe the components of an effective flow.
- Students will flow a Congressional debate speech.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Chapter 9 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional Debate*
- Student Generated Legislation from Lessons 2 and 3
- Student Generated Speeches from Lesson 4
- Sample Flows generated by instructor or taken from text
- Congressional debate videos

### OVERVIEW OF LESSON:

Class will participate in a Philosophical Lines discussion; the instructor will describe the components of flowing, students will take notes; students will flow two speeches.

**LESSON SIX DETAILS:**

Time	Content
0:00 – 0:20	<p>(Philosophical Chairs/Line) Select a topic for discussion/debate, perhaps using student or class legislation. Have students arrange themselves in two lines on opposite sides of the room based on their agreement with or disagreement with the topic (affirmatives to the left, negatives to the right, for instance). Tell them they will have a brief discussion about the topic following certain rules:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A student steps forward and says one sentence why they chose the side they did, then they step back into line.</li> <li>2. A student from the other line steps forward and paraphrases what the first student said, perhaps with the phrase “I understand that you think...”; after they successfully paraphrase what has been said, they say their own reason for being on their side of the issue.</li> <li>3. A student from the original side steps forward, paraphrases the second student’s argument, then says their own.</li> <li>4. No student may speak twice until at least three other students have spoken in the interval.</li> </ol> <p>Emphasize the importance of listening to each other and accurately summarizing what has been said. These skills are vital for refutation.</p>
0:20 – 0:35	Introduce the components of flowing: names, directionality, room for response, and concision/clarity (different color pens, for instance).
0:35 – 0:50	Display sample flows and ask students to identify each component.
0:50 – 0:60	Review the goals of flowing, particularly the linear connections between arguments.

## LESSON SEVEN

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why is listening important for debate?
- What does it mean to disprove an argument?

### ACTIVITIES:

- Students will describe the refutation process.
- Students will refute an argument in multiple ways.
- Students will incorporate refutations into a speech.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Chapter 9 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional Debate*
- Student Generated Legislation from Lessons 2 and 3
- Student Generated Speeches from Lesson 4
- Flows of a debate taken in Lesson 6

### OVERVIEW OF LESSON:

Class will participate in a Philosophical Lines discussion; the instructor will describe the components of refutation, students will take notes; students will construct refutations; students will deliver speeches with incorporated refutations.

## LESSON SEVEN DETAILS:

Time	Content
0:00 – 0:10	(Philosophical Chairs/Line) See Lesson 6 for overview of the Philosophical Lines activity; students should be familiar with the rules; again, emphasize the importance of listening for debate and refutation.
0:10 – 0:20	Introduce the four components of a refutation: Location, Summary, Response, and Impact. See Chapter 9 of text for explanation of these components.
0:20 – 0:30	Introduce the specific types of responses that can be made against an argument, i.e. claim or impact-level responses, warrant-specific responses, and data or evidence responses. The instructor should provide or solicit a sample argument (with a complete C/W/D/I structure), and then solicit response to each level of the argument from the class.
0:30 – 0:45	Working in pairs or small groups, students should select an argument from their flows from Lesson 6 and generate responses to each level of the argument. Advanced students or groups can be asked to generate multiple responses at each level (i.e. more than one evidence challenge, more than one warrant-specific answer, etc.).
0:45 – 1:00	Working in pairs or groups, students should deliver one or more responses generated in the previous activity, following the Location/Summary/Response/Impact model.

## LESSON EIGHT

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Why is listening important for debate?
- Why do we ask questions?

### ACTIVITIES:

- Students will describe the various goals of questioning.
- Students will craft effective questions.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Chapter 8 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional Debate*
- Flows of a debate taken in Lesson 6
- Student Speeches generated in Lesson 7

### OVERVIEW OF LESSON:

Class will participate in a Questions Only warm-up activity; instructor will overview the Communicative and Argumentative purposes of questioning; students will practice formulating effective questions; students will practice formulating effective answers.

## LESSON EIGHT DETAILS:

Time	Content
0:00 – 0:10	<p>(Questions Only) Instructor will explain the activity: participants must carry on a conversation only speaking in questions. An example:</p> <p>A: How are you? B: Who is asking? A: Why are you so defensive? B: Is this an interrogation?</p> <p>Neither speaker may answer any questions, unless the answer takes the form of a question; neither speaker may repeat any questions already asked.</p> <p>After the instructor models with a student, students should do the activity in partnerships or small groups.</p> <p>Stress the importance of really listening to one another in order to move the conversation.</p>
0:10 – 0:20	<p>Introduce the three communicative goals of questioning, using Chapter 8 of the text as a guide: <u>demonstrating poise</u>, <u>establishing control</u>, and <u>generating face time</u>.</p>
0:20 – 0:30	<p>Practice ways to display poise in questioning: controlled standing and posture (similar to speaking posture), direct address of questions, and active, visible listening. Instructor may solicit actual questions from students, and use them as a guide/segue to the argumentative goals of questioning.</p>
0:30 – 0:40	<p>Introduce the three argumentative goals of questioning: clarifying, challenging, and establishing.</p>
0:40 – 1:00	<p>Instructor should solicit a sample speech from a student; the class should flow the speech. Then, working in small groups or pairs, students should brainstorm three questions for each purpose (clarifying, challenging, and establishing) to ask the speaker.</p> <p>Optional: Groups may write short explanations for each question. Explaining how it fits a particular argumentative purpose. If time permits, have groups/pairs share out some questions, perhaps asking the instructor, to begin modelling the actual question/answer exchange.</p>



## LESSON NINE

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can we balance respect with disagreement?
- What makes a procedure fair?

### ACTIVITIES:

- Students will list the common procedural steps of a Congressional Debate session.
- Students will conduct procedural business.
- Students will record and determine precedence and recency.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Chapter 11 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional Debate*
- Student generated speeches/outlines for legislation
- Blank recency chart (found in the Congressional Debate Guide) for each student

### OVERVIEW OF LESSON:

Class will conduct the beginning of a session with instructor guidance; instructor will overview the role of a presiding officer, students will take notes; students will conduct a presiding officer election; students will begin debate.

### LESSON NINE DETAILS:

Time	Content
0:00 – 0:05	(Setting the Agenda) Instructor will explain that students need to take notes during this lesson but will also be asked to conduct procedural business. Instructor will explain agenda-setting process.
0:05 – 0:15	Students will caucus, nominate agendas, and vote on agenda (using the legislation assigned by the instructor and prepared for by the class)
0:15 – 0:25	Instructor will detail the role and responsibilities of the presiding officer: timekeeping, selection procedures, managing precedence and recency. All students should be expected to maintain a recency chart during the debate; instructor should distribute blank charts.
0:25 – 0:30	Instructor should conduct a presiding officer election for the debate.
0:30 – 0:40	The elected P.O. should deliver their opening spiel, and then students should all deliver an opening spiel to partners or small groups.
0:40 – 1:00	Instructor should outline the procedures used during a session: speech times, questioning times, tabling and ending debate, recesses, personal privilege, and points of order or information. If time permits, the presiding officer should call for the beginning speeches on the first agenda item. If not, debate will start in the next lesson.

## LESSON TEN

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can we balance respect with disagreement?
- How can we determine what is important in a debate?

### ACTIVITIES:

- Students will describe the goals of synthesis speaking.
- Students will deploy several types of argumentative weighing.
- Students will construct a synthesis speech.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Chapter 10 of *Introduction to Public Forum and Congressional Debate*
- Flows and Legislation from the previous day's debate.

### OVERVIEW OF LESSON:

Class will continue the debate from Lesson 9; after a few more cycles of debate, the instructor will describe synthesis speaking and its goals; instructor will describe different forms for synthesis speeches; students will continue the debate.

### LESSON TEN DETAILS:

Time	Content
0:00 – 0:20	Instructor should appoint or run an election for a new presiding officer. The new P.O. should continue the debate begun in Lesson 9 (or start the debate). Once the debate has reached at least three complete cycles (six total speeches, 3 affirmative and 3 negative), or two cycles if the debate is just starting in this lesson, the class should prepare to take notes.
0:20 – 0:30	Instructor should describe the importance of “fresh” speeches as a debate processes, and then describe the goals of synthesis speaking, using Chapter 10 as a guide. (Note: Chapter 10 refers to “Crystallization Speaking,” which is an artifact brought in from other events, Synthesis speaking is a more relatable name for this type of speech, so we use it here).
0:30 – 0:40	Instructor should describe different possible forms for synthesis speaking, soliciting ideas from the class (who will we working off their flow of the debate thus far) as to what arguments to cover and discuss in each form.
0:40 – 1:00	Students, working in small groups or pairs, should generate a synthesis speech based on the debate thus far. Time permitting, the instructor may solicit a sample synthesis speech to discuss as a class.