

Unit: Debate Camp

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Subject: English Language Arts

Grade Level/Course: Seventh Grade English Language Arts

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Alignments

(Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2014)

Please see the attached file for Big Ideas, Concepts, Competencies, and Eligible Content for all PA Core Categories for Speaking and Listening.



Curriculum_Framework
ork-Speaking-and-L

PA Core Standards for Speaking and Listening Addressed in this Lesson

CC.1.5.7.A Collaborative Discussion: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CC.1.5.7.B Critical Listening: Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CC.1.5.7.C Evaluating Information: Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, and orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

CC.1.5.7.D Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas Purpose, Audience, and Task: Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

CC.1.5.7.E Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas Context: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks.

CC.1.5.7.G Conventions of Standard English: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking based on Grade 7 level and content.

Big Ideas for this Lesson

Big Ideas

- Effective speakers prepare and communicate messages to address the audience and purpose

Essential Questions

- How do task, purpose, and audience influence how speakers craft and deliver a message?
- How do speakers employ language and utilize resources to effectively communicate a message?
- Active listeners make meaning from what they hear by questioning, reflecting, responding and

evaluating.

Essential Questions

- What do good listeners do?
- How do active listeners make meaning?
- How do active listeners know what to believe in what they hear?

Vocabulary

ARE (Assertion, Reasoning, Evidence)

Argument

Argument Anticipation

Articulation

Assertion

Causal reasoning

Debate

Extemporaneous

Heckle

Impact

Impromptu

Indirect Refutation

Logical fallacies

Off-case Arguments

Opposition Team

Point-of-Information (POI)

Poise

Proposition Team

Refutation

Tournament

The Tier 3 vocabulary for this unit was sourced from the text by Shuster and Meany (2005).

Objectives

By the end of this unit, students will

- Be able to summarize and describe effective debate practices (DOK Level 2, SOLO Multi-structural)
- Develop a logical argument and defend it using viable and credible evidence (DOK Level 3, SOLO Relational)
- Apply the concepts of debating practices to selected topics (DOK Level 4, SOLO Extended Abstract)
- Analyze the arguments presented and refute claims as necessary (DOK Level 4, SOLO Relational)
- Collaborate and communicate within a team to develop arguments regarding selected topics using active listening skills (DOK Level 3, 4; SOLO Relational)
- Use proper English grammar and style while writing and speaking on various topics (DOK Level 2)

Duration

This unit will take eight weeks.

Materials

- Presidential Debate clip featuring President Obama and Governor Romney discussing the purpose of government (BMILLER, 2012).
- Handouts from middleschooldebate.com (Middle School Public Debate Program, n.d.-a)
 - <http://www.middleschooldebate.com/resources/documents/Speaking.Listenin.g.handout.06.pdf>
 - <http://www.middleschooldebate.com/documents/introdebatehandout.pdf>
 - <http://www.middleschooldebate.com/documents/TAKINGNOTESINDEBATES.pdf>
 - <http://www.middleschooldebate.com/documents/note-takingtemplate.pdf>
 - <http://www.middleschooldebate.com/documents/AREchart.pdf>
 - Issue Briefs for In-Class Debates
 - Student Resources:
<http://www.middleschooldebate.com/resources/studentresources.htm>
 - And more.
- Shuster, K., & Meany, J. (2005). *Speak out! Debate and public speaking in the middle grades*. New York, NY: International Debate Education Association. Retrieved from <http://store.speechanddebate.org/asp/store/productdetail.aspx?ProductID=162&catid=6&subcatid=28>
- kshuster. (2012, May 17). *MSPDP Sample Debate: Television is a Bad Influence* - YouTube. YouTube. Retrieved April 19, 2014, from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vv1S9QPblv0> (*MSPDP Sample Debate: Television is a Bad Influence - YouTube*, 2012)

Instructional Strategies

WHERE TO – Wiggins and McTighe (Hohman, 2009)

Where are we going? Why? What is expected?

Discuss the Big Ideas and Essential Questions related to the unit.

Present the objectives of the unit and help students to relate the objectives to the Big Ideas and Essential Questions.

Check for misconceptions and address as necessary.

How will we hook the students?

Present the sample videos (BMILLER, 2012; *Final Public Debate - 2006 National Championship, 2012*, *Judge's Decision: MSPDP sample debate on Television, 2012*, *MSPDP Sample Debate: Television is a Bad Influence - YouTube, 2012*) and challenge them to attain that level of mastery in their own debates.

Help students make connections between good debating skills and future tasks in the work place.

Allow them to choose team mates and to choose the topics they will research and debate.

Allow students to suggest topics for debate if they do not find any of the suggested topics interesting.

Allow students to organize how they will approach preparing for the debate and give feedback to the team during debrief.

How will we equip students for expected performances?

Share handouts (Middle School Public Debate Program, n.d.-a) with the students in a structured way, allowing them to interrogate the text and practice the principles outlined in the document, with appropriate feedback from peers and the teacher.

For English Language Learners (Haggart, 2012):

- Frontload vocabulary pertinent to debating, public speaking, and active listening.
- Use graphic organizers and language frames (sentence starters) to help students organize their thoughts within a provided framework.
- Use multiple video and audio resources as examples of expected performance and allow students to practice taking notes during a debate, as well as summarizing arguments on both sides.
- Ensure that peer-to-peer interaction is available and that the results are fruitful.
- Ensure that feedback from peers is civil, encouraging, and constructive.
- Allow ELLs more time to refute an argument, so they can consult with teammates and write notes as needed.
- Provide rubrics that adhere to their WIDA Scale level and scaffold instruction as necessary.

For Special Needs Students (Haggart, 2012):

- Frontload vocabulary pertinent to debating, public speaking, and active listening.
- Use graphic organizers and language frames (sentence starters) to help students organize their thoughts within a provided framework.
- Use multiple video and audio resources as examples of expected performance and allow students to practice taking notes during a debate, as well as summarizing arguments on both sides.
- Ensure that peer-to-peer interaction is available and that the results are fruitful.
- Ensure that feedback from peers is civil, encouraging, and constructive.
- Allow Special Needs Students more time to refute an argument, so that they can consult with teammates and write notes as needed.
- Ensure that instructional supports are in place that are required by the students' IEP.

For Gifted and Talented Students:

- See the items above for Special Needs Students.
- Ensure that choices are available to G&T students that are sufficiently challenging.
- Ensure that they are allowed to mentor other students if they wish.

How will we rethink or revise?

Provide opportunities for self- and peer-assessment using rubrics and feedback protocols.

Use formative assessment to support student and team development.

- Practice sessions
- Review of reflective paragraphs (journal entries)

How will students self-evaluate and reflect their learning?

See the items above.

How will we tailor learning to varied needs, interests, and learning styles?

See items above under “equip.”

How will we organize the sequence of learning?

See below.

Instructional Procedures

Preparing for Day One

- Create posters for the Big Ideas and Essential Questions.
- Create posters for the standards addressed.
- Create posters for the vocabulary used.
- Create posters of checklists, graphic organizers, and ARE (Assertion, Reasoning, and Evidence).
- Put up the posters around the room the day before the unit begins.
- Put two tables with chairs at the front of the room for use during practice and during real debates.
- Put a banner on the front wall, above the whiteboard, that says, “Welcome to Debate Camp!”

Lesson One: Welcome to Debate Camp!

Activate Prior Knowledge and Introduce Something New

Watch a clip from the October 3, 2012 Presidential Debate in which President Obama and Governor Romney discuss the purpose of government (BMILLER, 2012).

- <http://www.c-span.org/video/?c4006656/purpose-government>

“ Review the clip with the students by asking the following questions:

1. We have studied active listening all year. What do good listeners do?
2. Rate yourself privately as a listener while you were watching the clip. Were you a good listener, or one in need of improvement? What did you do well? What could you have done to have listened better?
3. Rate the President and Governor on their listening skills. Do you think they were listening to the moderator and answering his question well? What did they do or say that showed active listening in action? What did they do or say that did not show that?

Introduce the Unit Topic

“This unit focuses on speaking and listening, two important skills that you must have as you continue through school and then move into the workforce. We are going to use debate to help you learn how to organize your thoughts and present them well to an audience.

“Why do you think public speaking is important?”

Allow students to answer.

Emphasis on Standard CC.1.5.7.D; point out the standard and review it with the class using the poster.

Emphasis on this long-term transfer goal:

“Listen actively to engage in a range of conversations, to analyze and synthesize idea and positions, and to evaluate accuracy in order to learn, reflect, and respond” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2014).

“There are three reasons why people will speak publicly: to inform, to persuade, and to entertain. In this class, we have practiced writing in these forms. Now, we are going to use those skills to prepare ourselves to speak in informative and persuasive ways, and to respond to others who have different opinions, to *debate*. The new part of this – the part you haven’t practiced much yet – is learning how to listen to another person and respond in the moment, as opposed to taking time to think about and write about your opinions. Why are we doing this?”

Allow students to answer.

“In the workplace today, people need to know how to collaborate and come to a consensus about something, like a project they are working on as a team. It is common to find that people have opinions, supported with evidence, about how tasks should be completed. They need to be able to express those opinions and then work with others to agree upon steps they will take as a team. They need to be able to *debate* the merits of a certain action and come to a consensus. This often has to take place within minutes or hours, depending on the complexity of the task. A person without the skills of public speaking and active listening is at a disadvantage and that person’s good ideas will often go unheard. What do I mean by that? (Writing Commons Staff, 2014)

Allow students to answer.

Gallery Walk: Allow students to survey the posters created and reflect upon their meaning. Review each poster with the entire class.

Lesson Two: Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication Skills (Standard CC.1.5.7.D)

“In this lesson, we are going to review verbal and non-verbal communication skills. These skills include volume, rate, emphasis, articulation, organization, and word choice (Shuster & Meany, 2005). First, we’ll review a few of the vocabulary words that you might not have heard before.

Review the vocabulary using the poster.

“Now, in your notebook, I want you to create a page that has the skills on the left with a few lines in between each skill, a line next to it, and a second line a couple of inches away from the first. We are going to review each skill. You’ll write your thoughts about each skill and then you will fill in the third column with information you learned from the discussion about the skill.

Display the note-taking format using the SMART board.

Skill	What I Know	What I Learned
Volume		
Rate		
Emphasis		
Articulation		
Organization		
Word Choice		

Allow students time to fill in the second column, then review the skills and let them fill in the third.

“Non-verbal communication skills include body positioning and movement, eye contact, gestures, and poise (Shuster & Meany, 2005). Let’s do the same exercise that we did with verbal communication skills. Prepare a notes sheet now, then we will discuss the vocabulary.

Display the note-taking format using the SMART board.

Skill	What I Know	What I Learned
Body positioning and movement		
Eye contact		
Gestures		
Poise		

“Did you know that some of these skills might be hard for some to master because their culture does not approve of the way we do things in the United States? For instance, there are cultures in which eye contact is not encouraged. If you are part of a cultural group that does not encourage certain skills, you are to let me and my team know that. No one will do anything they do not feel comfortable doing.

Homework

“Do a search on the Internet for effective persuasive words and words to avoid while speaking. Make a list of the words and bring them to class tomorrow. You can also review your notes from our writing lessons and add words as you find them.

Day Two – Day Six

Review the homework and scribe the responses using Word and the SMART board. This will become a handout for the students; print, copy, and distribute the next day.

“Today we will work on some of the skills we learned about yesterday using snippets of great speeches. The speeches will help you with volume, rate, emphasis, articulation, and the non-verbal communication skills we discussed. Part of the process of becoming an effective public speaker is to practice these skills; this we will do over the next five days.

Snippets

“Tomorrow’ Speech”

Macbeth’s plan to become the ruler of Scotland by assassination has failed. He is under attack at his castle. He realizes that his scheming has achieved nothing and that he has lost everything. He is disgusted by his failure and knows that his end is near.

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle!
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

(Shuster & Meany, 2005, p. 24)

4. Elizabeth I Speech to the Troops 1588

The “Virgin Queen”, Elizabeth I, made this speech at a pivotal moment in English history. It is a remarkable speech in extraordinary circumstances: made by a woman, it deals with issues of gender, sovereignty and nationality.

I am come amongst you, as you see, at this time, not for my recreation and disport, but being resolved, in the midst and heat of the battle, to live and die amongst you all; to lay down for my God, and for my kingdom, and my people, my honour and my blood, even in the dust. I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm; to which rather than any dishonour shall grow by me, I myself will take up arms, I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of every one of your virtues in the field.

(English Trackers Blogger, 2012)

7. John F. Kennedy *The Decision to go the Moon* **1961**

Great moments require great speeches. The simplicity of Kennedy's rhetoric preserves a sense of wonder at going beyond human capabilities, at this great event for science and technology.

We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.

(English Trackers Blogger, 2012)

Students will review the speeches chosen and choose one to recite. They will be organized into groups based on the speech chosen. The group will search the Internet to find a video in which the speech is delivered. Each one of these should be available on YouTube. They will watch the speech, to see how it has been delivered by a professional or by the original speaker. The teacher will ensure that they find a video that shows the speaker delivering the speech.

After watching the speech at least two times, they will work in teams to organize their thoughts about its delivery. They will ask and attempt to answer questions posed, try to define words that are new to someone in the group, and try to gain a better understanding of the context in which the speech was delivered. The teacher will review their progress and address misconceptions while walking from group to group.

Next, they will focus on, and make notes about, the volume, rate, emphasis, articulation, and the non-verbal communication skills used in the speech, using the note-taking format used earlier with these columns. (Standard CC.1.5.7.A is addressed here.)

Skill	What I Think	What the Team Thinks
Volume		
Rate		
Emphasis		
Articulation		
Body Positioning and Movement		
Eye Contact		
Gestures		
Poise		

One member of the team will share their findings with the rest of the class, as they have done in previous team assignments.

The team will then practice the speech. They will study it independently and then recite it to their teammates. The teammates will provide constructive feedback, as they have in the past when peer reviewing writing assignments.

Homework

Homework for those days will be to continue to practice the speech, using the rubric provided to guide their practice (see below). On Day Three, they will have their parents, guardians, or older siblings complete a rubric that informs the teacher and the student about their performance (see below).

Performance

On Days Four through Six, the students will perform the speech for their classmates, if they are ready to do so. English Language Learners and Special Needs students will be encouraged to watch their classmates first, then to perform. They will be graded according to this rubric, which does not include non-verbal communication skills as those are more difficult to develop and will be addressed at another time.

Skill	Needs Improvement	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Volume	You spoke too softly to be understood, or spoke too loudly. You did not vary the volume when appropriate.	You were speaking loud enough to be understood, but you did not vary the volume, or you varied the volume at inappropriate times.	You were speaking loud enough to be understood, and you varied the volume most of the time at the appropriate times.	You spoke loud enough to be understood and you varied the volume appropriately at all times.
Rate	You spoke either too fast or too slow.	At points in the speech, your rate of speaking was appropriate, but most of the time you were speaking too fast or too slow.	At most points in the speech, your rate of speaking was appropriate.	Your rate of speech was appropriate at all times.

Emphasis	You did not emphasize any parts of the speech.	You emphasized some words in the speech.	You emphasized where appropriate most of the time.	You emphasized where appropriate all of the time.
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Differentiated Instruction

Longer Speeches for those who would like more of a challenge.

Seattle. (1854). Speech Cautioning Americans to Deal Justly with His People, January 12, 1854. *Civil Rights and Conflict in the United States: Selected Speeches* (Lit2Go Edition). Retrieved April 20, 2014, from <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/185/civil-rights-and-conflict-in-the-united-states-selected-speeches/4706/speech-cautioning-americans-to-deal-justly-with-his-people-january-12-1854/> (Seattle, 1854)

Anthony, S. (1868). Is it a Crime for a Citizen of the United States to Vote?. *Civil Rights and Conflict in the United States: Selected Speeches* (Lit2Go Edition). Retrieved April 20, 2014, from <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/185/civil-rights-and-conflict-in-the-united-states-selected-speeches/4855/is-it-a-crime-for-a-citizen-of-the-united-states-to-vote/> (Anthony, 1868)

Thayer, E. (1888). Casey at the Bat. *Casey at the Bat* (Lit2Go Edition). Retrieved April 20, 2014, from <http://etc.usf.edu/lit2go/154/casey-at-the-bat/2726/casey-at-the-bat/> (Thayer, 1888)

Lesson Three: Introduction to Debate

Day Seven – Day Fifteen

Day Seven

“For the next seven days, we will be reviewing the specifics of debating. We’re going to take what we have learned about verbal and non-verbal communication skills and add to it the information we review about a specific type of public speaking: debate. The difference between making a speech and debating is the **argument** involved, the back and forth between people about a topic. What do I mean by “argument”?

Allow students to answer.

Review the vocabulary word on the poster.

“Here is the best definition I have found about debate, which you have already seen on the vocabulary poster, but I think we should discuss in more detail now.

Use PowerPoint to display the definition using the SMART board.

A debate is an **organized public argument** on a specific topic. It is organized, in that there are rules of debating. It is public because it is conducted for the benefit of an audience. It involves arguments, which are well-explained opinions. A debate is also on a specific topic, with one side arguing in favor and the other team opposing the issue. (Shuster & Meany, 2005, p. 44)

CC.1.5.7.A, CC.1.5.7.B, CC.1.5.7.C, and CC.1.5.7.D are addressed briefly in this part of the lesson.

“ In this lesson, we are going to learn about what a debate is. We’re going to start by comparing a debate to a trial. What are the characteristics of a trial?

Allow students to answer.

Use PowerPoint to display the definition using the SMART board.

- A specific topic, narrow in scope
 - “A topic is a focused set of ideas used to direct a discussion to a specific subject” (Shuster & Meany, 2005, p. 47).
- Two sides – for and against
- Both teams use evidence when they argue their points
- A judge or jury decides who won
- “One side has the burden of proof,” just like a prosecutor
 - The **proposition** team is the team with the burden of proof. They have to make their case.
 - The **opposition** team has to prove that the proposition team did not make its case.

Provide the handout about the Middle School Debate Program format (Shuster & Meany, 2002a). Review the document with them, helping them to chunk the document into sections using the heading provided. Instruct the students to read pages 1 – 5 completely, finishing the reading if necessary for homework. They will stop at the heading that starts with “Speaker Responsibilities...” Provide this instruction as well: Use the critical reading skills you have developed during the year to interrogate the text: underline or highlight words you do not understand, attempt to make meaning from the words within context, look up words you still do not understand, ask questions in the margin of the text, and attempt to summarize the text’s main points. You should have these guidelines in your notebook if you need to review them.

Day Eight – Day Ten

Standards CC.1.5.7.C and CC.1.5.7.B are addressed in these lessons.

Review the reading from the day before and address questions.

Day Eight

“ Now we are going to discuss how debates are organized, but I think it’s better that you see a sample debate first, then we can discuss what you saw and heard while you were watching the debate. Please take notes while watching the debate.

Play the sample debate (*MSPDP Sample Debate: Television is a Bad Influence - YouTube*, 2012).

Ask the following questions:

- “
1. What was the topic of the debate?
 2. What did the proposition side have to prove?
 3. What did the opposition side have to do?
 4. What did the two sides say about the topic?
 5. Who won, in your opinion?

Homework for Day Eight

The students will write about the debate they watched and what they thought was good and bad about it. They will use their notes the next day to compare what they thought to what the judge said.

Day Nine

- ““ Now we are going to watch the judge’s decision. Let me know if you made any notes that agree with what the judge said.

Play the judge’s decision (*Judge’s Decision: MSPDP sample debate on Television, 2012*)

- ““ Ask the following questions:

1. Tell me: Why would I show you a flawed debate, instead of a perfect one?
2. Who would like to share any notes you made and how they compare with what the judge said?
3. Was there any vocabulary used in this video that was new to you?

Day Ten

Play the debate from the 2006 National Championship of the Middle School Debate Program (*Final Public Debate - 2006 National Championship, 2012*) and discuss the differences between the first and second debate.

- ““ Ask the following questions:

1. What was the topic of the debate?
2. What did the proposition side have to prove?
3. What did the opposition side have to do?
4. What did the two sides say about the topic?
5. Who won, in your opinion?

Homework for Day Ten

Same as for day eight.

Day Eleven

CC.1.5.7.B and CC.1.5.7.C are addressed in this lesson.

- ““ Today we are going to discuss debate topics, debate teams, speaking order, time limits, and preparation periods. I would like you to skim the pages I’m going to give you first, highlight the important information you find and interrogate the text as we have done in the past by writing questions in the margins.

Handout: Pages 48 -49 of *Speak Out!* (Shuster & Meany, 2005). Have students highlight important information and interrogate the text. Review the highlights and questions.

Review each topic with the class while displaying the pages on the SMART board.

“Now I want to discuss with you two important vocabulary words: Point-of-Information and heckle. Let’s try to define these on our own first, then we’ll look at our vocabulary poster for more information. What do you think point-of-information, or POI is? What about heckling? Have you heard that word before and what did it mean when you heard it?

Review the vocabulary poster with the students.

“In the debates we watched, did you notice anyone calling POI or heckling? What did they do?

For the record, in our first debate, no one will be allowed to call for a Point of Information, because it would probably be confusing to the speaker. In the second debate, however, POIs will be allowed. If you are going to heckle, you should keep it very short and respectful.

Day Twelve

CC.1.5.7.B, CC.1.5.7.D, CC.1.5.7.C, CC.1.5.7.E are addressed in this lesson.

Use PowerPoint to display the difference between debate topics and topic areas. Topic areas are more general than the topics themselves, which are (remind the students) focused and narrow in scope.

Again, use PowerPoint to introduce the vocabulary word **argument anticipation**, which I have also heard called “opposition prep.” Perhaps those in sports could discuss how they prepare for a game – how do they get to know what the other side is likely to do? **How do professional athletes like Peyton Manning prepare for a game?** They watch a lot of video, that’s for sure. They analyze their opponent’s every move, looking for patterns in their play that they can manipulate. We do the same thing in argument anticipation, except we’re trying **to figure out all the arguments that the other team will make and we’re trying to refute those arguments.** Just like an athlete, we still have to prepare our game, so you will **have to research your side thoroughly, while you also try to anticipate and prepare for what the other side is going to say.**

Note to self: In traditional debates, competitors do not know what side they are going to be on till the day of the debate. I’m not going to go that route with this introduction to debate, as it will give more time to ELLs and Special Needs students to prepare themselves to take one side or the other.

Day Thirteen

CC.1.5.7.G and CC.1.5.7.A are addressed in this lesson.

“Today we are going to start working with debate topics. We are going to work with the same skills we worked with while writing persuasive essays. Let’s review what some of those were.

Possible answers: research skills; using evidence to support one’s point; considering opposing views; strong opening and conclusion; knowing facts versus opinions; using pathos, ethos, logos, and kairos, etc.

“One difference between persuasive writing and debate is that you aren’t trying to convince the other side they are wrong (Shuster & Meany, 2002b). You are trying to convince the judge and audience that you have argued your case more successfully than the other side. Otherwise, the same skills apply and to them we add effective public speaking skills, such as those we practice way back in the beginning of the unit. Don’t worry – you’ll get plenty of time to practice those skills again.

Have students form groups of three and arrange their desks so they are facing one other. Assign topics to the student groups by giving them a card with the topic on it. If you have extra students that can form groups, find another topic; if not, let them join a group as a “manager.” This role might be good for ELLs or Special Needs students, as they would have time to become accustomed to debate and might not have to speak the first time – this could be the way to differentiate instruction. Tell the students that the left side of the room is going to take the proposition side of the topic and the right side of the room is going to take the opposition side. Question them to ensure they know what those two words mean; they may have forgotten. Refer them to the vocabulary poster as well.

Using the SMART board, Navigate to the web page on research topics from [middleschooldebate.com: http://www.middleschooldebate.com/topics/topicresearch.htm](http://www.middleschooldebate.com/topics/topicresearch.htm) and tell the students that the class will be using this page for topics and for research sites. Tell them to make a note of this URL in their notebooks for future reference.

Their first topics will be:

- “There should be year-round schooling for students in grades K-12.”
- “Cell phones should be allowed in schools.”
- “Homework should be banned.”
- “In the case of student lockers, school safety is more important than student privacy.”

(Middle School Public Debate Program, n.d.-b)

Handout the “Guide to Speaking and Listening” PDF (Shuster & Meany, n.d.-b) and have them draw a three column chart in their notebook. Tell them to label one column “assertion,” the second “reasoning,” and the third “evidence.” Tell them this is the A-R-E framework that will help them organize their thoughts. Tell them to write the topic at the top of the page. If they are on the proposition team, they are to write “Proposition” under the topic; if they are the opposition, they are to write “Opposition” under the topic and add “not” after the word “should” in the topic sentence.

Let them review the guide handout for a few minutes on their own. Then, tell them they are to start by making a list of assertions about the topic based on what they know and think at this time about it. Have them think in terms of answering the question, “Why should (shouldn’t) there ...?”

Give them the cost-benefit graphic organizer (Shuster & Meany, n.d.-a) and tell them to hold onto it for the next day.

Homework for Day Thirteen

Students will read the handout “Introduction to Debate” (Shuster & Meany, 2002b). They will respond to these comprehension questions in writing:

1. How do you now understand the word “argument” and what it means as it relates to debating?
2. What makes a debate different from other types of persuasive communication, such as persuasive writing?
3. What is, according to the article, the purpose of learning how to debate?

Standards CC.1.5.7.C and CC.1.5.7.B are addressed in this homework assignment.

This will be a formative assessment, to verify the students are understanding critical aspects of debate.

Day Fourteen

“ Today is research day. We are going to use this URL: <http://www.middleschooldebate.com/topics/topicresearch.htm> to find information about our topic and we are going to use the cost-benefit graphic organizer I gave you yesterday to make some notes about the topic.

“ First, let’s talk about the terms cost and benefit. When we did persuasive writing, we talked about two words: pro and con. What category would a cost fall under – pro or con? What category would a benefit fall under – pro or con?

Let the students answer each question.

The graphic organizer should be self-explanatory, but you can answer any questions that the students might have, then let them loose in groups to do the research and fill out the graphic organizer. Instruct them to add to the organizer the assertions they came up with yesterday, along with anything they find in their research. These two documents will be used the next day to start preparing their speeches.

Homework for Day Fourteen

Students will review the judge’s rubric for information about how they will be judged during their first debate (Middle School Public Debate Program, 2006). This is the rubric the teacher will use to assign points to the speakers.

Day Fifteen

Display using PowerPoint

Preparing Speeches

- First Proposition Speech – 5 minutes (Ours will be 3 minutes this time)
- First Opposition Speech – 5 minutes (Ours will be 3 minutes this time)
- Second Proposition Speech – 5 minutes (Ours will be 3 minutes this time)
- Second Opposition Speech – 5 minutes (Ours will be 3 minutes this time)
- Opposition Rebuttal Speech – 3 minutes
- Proposition Rebuttal Speech – 3 minutes

Display using PowerPoint

The first four speeches...are called constructive speeches. In these, each team will construct, or build, its arguments. Debaters may introduce new arguments in any of these speeches. The final two speeches for each side are called

rebuttal speeches. These are summary speeches in which the debaters make the best case for their side and eliminate the major points of the other team. NO NEW ARGUMENTS ARE PERMITTED IN THE REBUTTAL SPEECHES. (Shuster & Meany, 2005, p. 49)

“ Today we are going to start working on our speeches. In a regular debate, you would not be allowed to read your prepared speeches, but since this is the first one, we’re going to allow it. We’re going to use the persuasive writing skills that we worked on earlier in the year to create speeches for the first and second proposition and opposition speeches. They will be three minutes long, instead of the usual five. In your groups, you will figure out who is going to write each speech.

“ Use your notes to evaluate your assertions, reasoning, and evidence. As we did with persuasive writing, start with an outline. Each point you make should have an assertion, reasoning, and evidence and it would be best to organize your outline so that each point is its own paragraph. Try to stick to two major points for the first and second speeches and assign the talking points to each speaker. That’s probably all you’ll get to today.

Show this example outline:

Topic: Fill in your topic here and indicate if you are on the proposition or opposition side.

Introductory paragraph: Make it a strong paragraph that introduces the topic and the points you are about to make.

Point One: Explicitly state point one as an assertion.

- State your team’s reasoning for that assertion.
- State the evidence for the assertion.
- Include a transition to point two

Point Two: Explicitly state point two as an assertion.

- State your team’s reasoning for that assertion.
- State the evidence for the assertion.
- Include a transition to the conclusion.

Conclusion: Reiterate the topic and your talking points as a summary.

Homework for Day Fifteen

“ Write a draft of your speech, if you have been assigned to write a speech. If you have not been assigned to write a speech yet, start writing thoughts about your rebuttal, because you will be responsible for the rebuttal speech, which we will work on soon.

Lesson Four: First Debate

Day Sixteen – Day Twenty-Two

CC.1.5.7.G and CC1.5.7.A are addressed in this lesson.

Day Sixteen – Day Seventeen

Continue working on drafts. Teammates should edit speeches together, as they have done during persuasive speech writing activities. They should also practice reading the speeches.

Manage by walking around the room and reviewing progress. Instruct them that they should practice their speeches at home, just as they did with the speeches before, and their parents, guardians, or older siblings should complete the rubric used before; provide a fresh copy.

Day Eighteen – Day Nineteen

CC.1.5.7B, CC.1.5.7.C, CC.1.5.7.D, and CC1.5.7.E are addressed in this part of Lessons Four, Five, and Six.

Teams are matched with their competition. Each group presents the first two speeches, in the format described on day fifteen. This will be the first time they use the tables at the front of the room for debating. The rebuttal speech writers are allowed to take notes so they can prepare for their rebuttal. Explain that normally teams would not be given so much time to prepare a rebuttal, but this is the first debate, so more preparation time will be allowed.

Day Twenty

Prepare rebuttal speeches. Remind them that the rebuttal speeches are summaries of the most important points provided by speakers one and two and attempts to eliminate the arguments of the other team. They cannot introduce new information; they have to work with the information they have. Instruct them that they should practice their speeches at home, just as they did with the speeches before, and their parents, guardians, or older siblings should complete the rubric used before; provide a fresh copy.

Day Twenty-One

Present rebuttal speeches. Celebrate the success of all the teams – if only for being courageous and participating.

Day Twenty-Two

Present the judge’s findings about the teams, not the students’ performance. The performance of individual students will be shared using the rubric, which will be provided to the student.

Lesson Five: Second Debate

Day Twenty-Three – Day Twenty-Eight

The second debate will include the same activities as the first debate. In this debate, they will be allowed to use Points of Information and respectful heckling.

The topics for this debate will be:

- “Violent video games should be banned.”
- “Homeland security is more important than protection of civil liberties.”
- “Junk food should be banned in schools.”
- “Peer pressure is more beneficial than harmful.”

(Middle School Public Debate Program, n.d.-b)

Lesson Six: Third Debate

Day Twenty-Nine – Day Thirty-Four

The third debate will include the same activities as the second debate, but this time there will be less assistance with research; in other words, they will have to find valid information

without having suggested sites to pick from as they had in the first two debates. If there are managers for a team, someone else should take that role.

Additionally, rebuttal speeches will be done directly after the two proposition / opposition debates and teams will have ten minutes to prepare them.

The topics for this debate will be chosen by the teacher. Suggested topics include:

- All students should go to college.
- Art and music classes help students receive a well-rounded education.
- Students should start learning a second language in Kindergarten.
- Physical Education class should be a year-round, daily activity.

Lesson Seven: Reflection

Day Thirty-Five – Day Forty

Day Thirty-Five – Day Thirty-Nine

Students will write a reflection on their debating experience and share their reflections with their teams and the class. Heckling and POIs will be allowed during the reflection presentation, as long as they are pertinent to the presentation and respectful.

They will use the Big Ideas and Essential Questions to guide them as they write and answer the question, “What can you take away from this experience that will help you for the rest of your life?”

The teacher will manage by walking around, answering questions, providing feedback, and making suggestions.

Big Ideas for this Lesson

Big Ideas

- Effective speakers prepare and communicate messages to address the audience and purpose

Essential Questions

- How do task, purpose, and audience influence how speakers craft and deliver a message?
- How do speakers employ language and utilize resources to effectively communicate a message?
- Active listeners make meaning from what they hear by questioning, reflecting, responding and evaluating.

Essential Questions

- What do good listeners do?
- How do active listeners make meaning?
- How do active listeners know what to believe in what they hear?

Day Forty

Teachers Debate! Students Judge!

Assembly for 7th grade in which the teachers are the debaters and the students use a rubric to judge their performance. Get the whole team in on it!

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Reflection

This unit was difficult to create, but worth every moment spent on it. Speaking and listening is a strand that teachers can solely focus on after standardized testing is over; I think it might help mitigate the effects of spring fever by reinvigorating students' interest in learning through a change of focus. Additionally, I found myself relating the development of speeches to writing tasks I would have done throughout the year, such as persuasive writing and research. It seemed to me that this unit pulled the strands for language arts together: deep reading, writing, grammar and style, and speaking and listening. Debate also provides students an opportunity to work in teams, develop thoughts together, think critically, respond respectfully and constructively, and practice their public speaking skills in a creative and challenging way. While developing the unit, I found it important to keep going back to the Big Ideas and Essential Questions, as well as the competencies, so I could ensure that the activities would address them and the long-term transfer goals I had in mind when I chose the topic.

The Big Ideas and Essential Questions of the Speaking and Listening strand fit perfectly with the topic for this unit. Effective preparation and communication of messages is a critical requirement of successful debating, and so is the ability to actively listen to another speaker and be able to question, reflect, respond, and evaluate what the speaker has said. I tried to weave these ideas into the discussion with students, especially at the beginning when they were first learning about debate. The competencies provided by the Curriculum Framework helped me to form the objectives for the unit. They also helped me to write objectives that were attainable, differentiate instruction as needed, and develop the learning activities. Using the WHERE TO framework also helped keep me on track, I think; I think the framework is absolutely brilliant.

Using the Big Ideas, Essential Questions, and competencies helped me to write my script in a way that would help students see the purpose of the lesson, to answer the question, “Why are we learning this?” When I was in school, teachers rarely (if ever) explained why we were learning something. We often asked ourselves, “What’s the point of learning [insert topic here]?” I was able to frame the discussion I would have about the purpose of the unit using those aspects of the Curriculum Framework (see page 7 of this document) and try to relate what they would learn with what they would need to know in the future – in other classes, in college, and in the workforce. Collaborative and active listening skills are critical skills to have today; team work is the norm and people need to know how to work with others in constructive and productive ways. Posting these elements around the room would help me to remind students about the true purpose of the unit whenever I needed to, whenever they became discouraged or started to question what we were doing. In my experience with middle school students, enthusiasm about anything can be difficult to muster at times.

Finally, I think that beginning and ending with the Curriculum Framework components emphasized their importance. The last lesson, the reflection, asks the students to use the Big Ideas and Essential Questions in their speeches about what they learned during the unit, to help them answer the question, “What can you take away from this experience that will help you for the rest of your life?” Allowing other students to ask questions during the speech (request a POI or Point of Information) and to heckle (which does not mean what one might think; in debate, it’s a response to what someone says such as tapping on the desk) reinforces how important it is and was to develop their communication skills and to learn to question and respond in non-aggressive, collaborative ways. If the students are able to articulate how the unit changed them, what new knowledge they have constructed for themselves about collaborative discussion, articulating a position verbally, responding to another’s point of view, and asking reflective questions that show active listening, then this experience would

be, I think, life changing for many of the students. In my opinion, that's what the Curriculum Framework is for: to help teachers design and implement life-changing experiences that they will never forget.