

DEBATE NOT ARGUE

How to create a balanced debate

Gathering arguments:


The participants should draw from a variety of sources and include different types of information like statistics, expert testimonies, anecdotes etc.



The arguments should be formed from a collection of different sources and arguments as merely pigeoning the work of others will weaken the arguments. One should give careful consideration to the type of sources and their origin. It is important that the sources are independently fact checked and/or come from a reputable source.

Finding sources that might counteract your points can also be useful as this will help you prepare for possible rebuttals to your arguments.

Debate Fallacies:

 Not every argument is a valid argument. Knowing these debate fallacies will not only help participants avoid these mistakes in their own plea but also help them point them out when the opposition uses them.

Ad Hominem/Personal attack:

Don't focus on people's personal choices, this does not nullify the content of the argument itself.

"You say you are against hunting but you eat meat yourself"

Don't use derogatory attacks purely based on someone's being or identity.

"This is something an 18 year old girl wouldn't know"

Wrongfully appointed authority:

Only quote people who have authority relevant to the debate, not every scientist/professor etc. knows something about every subject.

Personal experiences with the subject do not equate to having relevant knowledge about it.

Ad populum:

Using an argument popular with the audience when speaking to them is only relevant if what is being claimed is proven in another way.



Strawman argument:

A strawman argument is when you attack a twisted or wrongly contextualized argument of the opposition rather than actually reacting to the argument itself.

"You are saying cancer research is more important than HIV research, so you are saying HIV research isn't important"

Circular reasoning:

Using circular reasoning means you fall back on the same argument but with different words.

"God exists because the bible says so and what the bible says is true because it was written by God"

Emotional manipulation:

Using arguments that awaken pity or empathy with the audience without the argument itself having any strong content to it.

Shifting the burden of proof:

Claiming that because the contrary can't be proven it must be true.

"There is no other explanation for the strange lights seen in the sky so therefore it must be aliens"

Finding skilled and impartial jury members:

It is very important that the chosen jury members have relevant knowledge of the subject at hand as well as the debate judgment criteria. The jury should be able to judge the teams' arguments independently of their personal beliefs and should preferably not have any personal relationship with any of the participants.