

## THE REAL DEBATES

### THE SKILLS

Throughout this course students must emphasize the ability to communicate your ideas succinctly and effectively, both orally and in writing. While personal opinions are meaningful, there is a need to ground such ideas in research. In preparation for the debates, students will delve into the realm of research and build research skills, critical analysis of sources, and analytical skills. Finally, the debates will provide opportunities for you to rethink your own perspectives and ideas in relation to relative research.

### THE TASK

In groups, you will debate the merits of a particular side of an assigned topic (see topic list). Your role will be to assure you develop a cohesive argument, regardless if you agree with the position you have been assigned.

Each group will be given two opinion papers – one will support the “yes” debate position while the other will refute their agenda. While these articles are extremely useful, they should not be used as the sole source of research for your debate; they are the catalyst to further rigorous and systematic investigation. The class will be visiting York U Library (field trip) to undergo a more extensive research of topic.

### THE CATCH

Groups will research BOTH sides of the issue. Why? On the date of the debate, groups will “draw” for sides (representing red or blue) —thus, you **MUST** be ready to argue either side at that given moment. Teams will have 5 minutes to **organize** opening statements, arguments and concluding statements. Not only it is important to defend your position, superior debaters are ready to counter the arguments of the opposing side. All such arguments **must** be accompanied by tangible research (i.e. overheads, handouts, charts, graphs, pictures) to make for a more meaningful and exact debate.

### THE FORMAT

The debate will entail the following format: Opening Arguments, Rebuttals (two rounds), Closing Arguments, and finally Class Discussion. You will be evaluated by the teacher; the class will award “points” during debate to determine a winner.

## THE MARKS

### ✓ ORAL: THE REAL DEBATE RUBRIC

Students will be marked on the thoroughness, effectiveness, delivery and defense of their arguments. Top marks will be reserved for students able to articulate their ideas with a superior level of originality, sophistication and invention. Peer assessment will be completed by random students who award “points” based on strong statements, arguments, evidence and rebuttals and determine a winning team!

*\* NOTE: all students will receive an INDIVIDUAL MARK based on own arguments / evidence / rebuttals etc. during debate*

### ✓ WRITTEN: THE DEBATE ARTICLE CRITIQUE RUBRIC

Each student will also be marked on an Article Critique on their assigned debate article. The critique must coherently summarize the arguments made by the author(s), outline the articles strengths and weaknesses and express your own opinion on the matter and the validity of the source / article. See instructions and rubric for more details.

## DEBATE ARTICLE CRITIQUE

A critique is a systematic analysis of an idea or piece of literature that discusses its validity and evaluates its worth.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Your critique should include a brief *synopsis* of the article plus an *analysis* of the scholarly writing, understandable to someone who hasn't read the article. The critique should be approximately 500 words (max 750) and contain the following:

- a) Introduction
  - first sentence(s) should be “attention grabbing”
  - a summary of the main question or argument (thesis) dealt with in the article
  - give brief background of topic / issue and description of the importance
- b) Synopsis
  - In own words give a synopsis of article addressing the objectives, design, methods, arguments, evidence and conclusions by the author(s)
- c) Critique
  - Brief identification of strengths of article and explanation of why they are strengths
  - More detailed identification of weaknesses and limitations and explanation of why they are weaknesses / limitations
  - Validity of arguments and evidence in the article based on other research conducted
  - Explanation of whether you support the author’s conclusions and why
- d) Conclusion
  - description your own reactions regarding the article
  - additional questions that need further research
  - concluding sentence
- d) Other

All writings in this course should adhere strictly to the MLA style, as outlined in the MLA Handbook.

Papers should use 12 point font, double line spacing, and should include a descriptive / explanatory title and page numbering. When you draw upon other references and resources in this assignment you will need to know how to cite sources used in writing

and should provide a complete bibliography. For this short piece of writing, subheadings are not necessary.

To make it clear when you are presenting your personal viewpoint (as opposed to the views of the authors of an article) you should write using "first person". For example write "I believe that..." rather than "It is believed that...". This goes hand-in-hand with avoiding the use of passive voice (see below).

Lastly, the critique should be written in active (rather than passive) voice, as this will make your writing clearer and easier to read. Structurally this means you should put the subject at the start of your sentences and have the subject be "the doer of the action". So, for example we ask that you write "**Sam claims that...**" rather than saying "**It was claimed by Sam that ...**". For a simple and clear explanation on how to avoid the pitfalls of passive voice see: [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g\\_actpass.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_actpass.html).

**HELPFUL LINKS**

<http://www.markville.ss.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/history/honours/links.html>

**ARTICLE CRITIQUE: EVALUATION RUBRIC**

Element	Comments
<p><b>Summary/Synopsis (Knowledge/ Understanding)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clarifies the main question or argument dealt with in article.</li> <li>- Describes the main features of the approach taken by the writer or researcher.</li> <li>- Summarizes the main points or conclusions in own words (avoids direct quotes).</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Critique/Analysis (Thinking / Inquiry and Application)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identifies the basis of your critique or point of view.</li> <li>- Includes critique of strengths and weaknesses as well as validity of arguments and evidence / sources</li> <li>- Includes a personal response (i.e. questions, concerns) to the article based on your own knowledge and experience.</li> <li>- Illustrates coherence and clarity of argument, critique, and/or analysis.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Writing style and format (Communication)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writing is clear and concise.</li> <li>- Length appropriate – approx 500 words; maximum of 750 words.</li> <li>- Critique is written in active voice</li> <li>- Scholarly, academic writing style and tone is used.</li> <li>- Your voice is evident and distinct from that of article author.</li> <li>- Grammar, punctuation, and spelling correct.</li> <li>- MLA format is followed</li> </ul>	

## The Great Debate Rubric

	<b>Level 4</b>	<b>Level 3</b>	<b>Level 2</b>	<b>Level 1</b>
<b>Knowledge/ Understanding</b>	-shows a high to very high degree of understanding of ideas/concepts/themes/information	-shows a considerable degree of understanding of ideas/concepts/themes/information	-shows a moderate degree of understanding of ideas/concepts/themes/information	-shows an insufficient degree of understanding of ideas/concepts/themes/information
<b>Thinking/ Inquiry</b>	-uses critical/creative thinking skills to with a high to very high degree of effectiveness  -uses critical listening skills (e.g., identifying main ideas and significant supporting details; assessing validity of arguments and conclusions; making inferences; evaluating implicit and explicit ideas; detecting assumptions, omissions, biases) with a high degree of effectiveness	-uses critical/creative thinking skills with a degree of effectiveness  -uses critical listening skills (e.g., identifying main ideas and significant supporting details; note making; assessing validity of arguments and conclusions; making inferences; evaluating implicit and explicit ideas; detecting assumptions, omissions, biases) with effectiveness	-uses critical/creative thinking with moderate effectiveness  -uses critical listening skills (e.g., identifying main ideas and significant supporting details; note making; assessing validity of arguments and conclusions; making inferences; evaluating implicit and explicit ideas; detecting assumptions, omissions, biases) with a moderate degree of effectiveness	-uses critical/creative thinking with insufficient effectiveness  -uses critical listening skills (e.g., identifying main ideas and significant supporting details; note making; assessing validity of arguments and conclusions; making inferences; evaluating implicit and explicit ideas; detecting assumptions, omissions, biases) with little or no effectiveness
<b>Communication</b>	-applies oral communication skills (e.g., correct grammar and sentence structure; rhetorical devices; voice projection; gestures; body language; timing) with a high to very high degree of effectiveness  -uses academic theoretical language with a high to very high degree of effectiveness	-applies oral communication skills (e.g., correct grammar and sentence structure; rhetorical devices; voice projection; gestures; body language; timing) with a sound degree of effectiveness  -uses academic theoretical language with a sound degree of effectiveness	-applies oral communication skills (e.g., correct grammar and sentence structure; rhetorical devices; voice projection; gestures; body language; timing) with a moderate degree of effectiveness  -uses academic theoretical language with a moderate degree of effectiveness	-uses little application of oral communication skills (e.g., correct grammar and sentence structure; rhetorical devices; voice projection; gestures; body language; timing)  -does not use academic theoretical language
<b>Application</b>	- organizes researched ideas and information coherently with a high to very high degree of effectiveness (visuals)	- organizes researched ideas and information coherently with considerable effectiveness (visuals)	- organizes researched ideas and information coherently with moderate effectiveness (need more visual evidence)	- organizes researched ideas and information coherently with insufficient effectiveness (little to no visual evidence)

Comments:

# The Real Debates: Peer Assessment

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Each team will complete a peer assessment and awards “points” to debaters throughout the debates.
2. Write in Debaters Names once sides have been assigned.
3. During debate, award “points” to debaters ANY TIME a VALID point / argument / evidence / rebuttal etc. is given. At the end of the debate, total up points awarded to determine a winning team.
4. Include comments to debate team for peer feedback.

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Name: FOR (Yes)</b>	<b>POINTS AWARDED</b>	<b>Name: AGAINST (NO)</b>	<b>POINTS AWARDED</b>
1.		1.	
2.		2.	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>TOTAL</b>	

<b>COMMENTS</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
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## REAL DEBATE TOPIC LIST

**Monk, Richard. TAKING SIDES: Clashing Views on Controversial Issues in Crime and Criminology, Sixth Edition Connecticut: Dushkin / McGraw-Hill, 2001.**

Issue	Group Members (4)
1. Is Crime always functional?	
2. Does Rap Music Contribute to Violent Crime?	
3. Does IQ Contribute Significantly to Crime?	
4. Should Juvenile Courts be Abolished?	
5. Do More Guns lead to Less Crime?	
6. Is the Segregation of HIV Positive Inmates Ethical?	
7. Should Serial Killers and Violent Sexual Offenders be Quarantined?	
8. Is Capital Punishment Bad Policy?	

**Slife, Brent. TAKING SIDES: Clashing Views on Controversial Psychological Issues, Twelfth Edition Connecticut: Dushkin / McGraw-Hill, 2002.**

Issue	Group Members (4)
1. Should Animals be Used in Psychological Research?	
2. Does Spanking Lead Children to Become More Violent?	
3. Does Viewing Television Increase Aggression?	
4. Do Rewards Facilitate Learning?	
5. Does Electroshock Therapy Cure Depression?	
6. Does Religious Commitment Improve Mental Health?	

**Paul, Elizabeth. TAKING SIDES: Clashing Views on Controversial Sex and Gender Issues, Second Edition Connecticut: Dushkin / McGraw-Hill, 2002.**

Issue	Group Members (4)
1. Are Humans Naturally Either Male or Female?	
2. Is Fetal Sex Selection Harmful to Society?	
3. Is Gender the Most Critical Factor in the Recent Spate of School Shootings?	
4. Is Gender Variation a Psychological Illness?	
5. Can Women's Sexuality Be Free From Traditional Gender Constraints?	

**Alexander, Alex, Hanson, Jarson. TAKING SIDES: Clashing Views on Controversial in Mass Media and Society Issues, Seventh Edition Connecticut: Dushkin / McGraw-Hill, 2003.**

Issue	Group Members (4)
1. Are American Values Shaped by Mass Media?	
2. Is Television Harmful to Children?	
3. Is Emphasis on Body Image in the Media Harmful to Females Only?	
4. Should Tobacco Advertising Be Restricted?	
5. Is Advertising Ethical?	
6. Is Negative Campaigning Bad for the American Political Process?	
7. Do the Media have Liberal Bias?	
8. Will Technology Change Social Interaction?	

# **The Real Debate Format** (32 minutes)

## **Opening Statements**

Yes: 2 Minutes

No: 2 Minutes

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## **1<sup>st</sup> Argument**

Yes: 3 Minutes

## **Rebuttal**

No: 1 Minutes

## **1<sup>st</sup> Argument**

No: 3 Minutes

## **Rebuttal**

Yes: 1 Minutes

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## **2<sup>nd</sup> Argument**

No: 3 Minutes

## **Rebuttal**

Yes: 1 Minutes

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Argument**

Yes: 3 Minutes

## **Rebuttal**

No: 1 Minutes

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## **Open Debate**

8 Minutes

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## **Closing Statements**

Yes: 2 Minutes

No: 2 Minutes