ELA 3-4H Policy Debate Instructions

**Policy Debate Format: 2 DAYS**

First affirmative constructive (3 – 5 minutes) can be completely written and learned in advance! YOUR TEAM MAY CHOOSE YOUR PRESENTER FOR THIS IN ADVANCE and you may write as a team. You may use Keynote, Ppt, etc. for reference.

**Introduction**
- Opening - state your name and partner’s name and that you are speaking for the affirmative; express pleasure for opportunity to debate the topic; state the resolution
- Define key terms
- Present your thesis statement to show where you are going, e.g., This is a serious problem and the present system will not solve the problem; our plan will solve the problem

**Body**
- Describe the issue, using a combination of logos, ethos, and pathos
- Support the affirmative case with 4 – 6 contentions, have at least 3 supporting pieces of evidence and reasoning (save at least 1 for rebuttal)
  - Establish the need for change – why this is a serious problem (qualitative/quantitative)
  - Establish the harm of the present system – people or other living beings are hurt physically, emotionally, financially, socially
  - Establish how the present system contributes to the problem (inherency)
- Briefly introduce your plan and how it solves the problem

**Conclusion**
- Summarize your position. Say “Thank you.”

First negative constructive (3 – 5 minutes) YOUR TEAM MAY CHOOSE YOUR PRESENTER FOR THIS IN ADVANCE and you may write as a team. You may use Keynote, Ppt, etc. for reference.

**Introduction**
- Greet - state your name and partner’s name and that you are speaking for the negative; express pleasure for the opportunity to debate the topic of ____
- Either accept the affirmative’s definitions or correct definitions presented by affirmative
- Describe the issue from the point of view of the negative
- Introduce your case with your thesis statement: “We intend to prove that there is no need to ____

**Body**
- State negative philosophy by presenting 4 – 6 contentions; have at least 3 pieces of evidence and reasoning to support them (save at least 1 to reestablish during rebuttal)
  - Refute the need for change; explain why the status quo is preferable (defend present system)
  - Deny that the present system contributes to the problem (inherency)
  - Why there is no reason for change; diminish significance (quantitative/qualitative)
  - Why change could be worse than the present system
- Attack the need for a plan, possibly why it will cause more harm than good
- (Optional advanced strategy! You can accept that the status quo could be changed in a MINOR way; then introduce a counter plan that is significantly different from the affirmative’s plan.)
- Clash: Refute affirmative’s points with evidence and reasoning

**Conclusion**
- Summarize the negative case so far. Say “Thank you.”
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  (5 MINUTE BREAK)

Second affirmative constructive (3 – 5 minutes) THIS SPEAKER WILL BE CHOSEN AT RANDOM (IMPROPTU)

**Introduction**
- Present overview of the debate so far, contrasting affirmative and negative positions
- Defend definitions of terms and topicality, if necessary
- Present a thesis statement to show where you are going, e.g., _______ is a problem that must be solved and our plan will do it.
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**Body**
- Attack the negative philosophy defending the present system, especially harm and significance
- Clash. Directly address each of the specific challenges issued by the negative
- Reestablish why change is necessary
- Explain your plan with details; describe the benefits of the plan, how the plan will solve the problem

**Conclusion**
- End with an appeal to adopt the resolution. Say “Thank you.”

**Second negative constructive (3 – 5 minutes) THIS SPEAKER WILL BE CHOSEN AT RANDOM (IMPROMPTU)**

**Introduction**
- Review / reinforce negative philosophy
- Present thesis, e.g., *We will prove that there isn’t a problem, that the plan is bad, that the plan is unnecessary*

**Body**
- Present contentions, attacking the plan as undesirable, unable to solve needs, or unnecessary
  - Practicality, workability – specific elements of the plan
  - Solvency – demonstrate that the plan is not capable of solving the problem
  - Disadvantages – explain that more harm will result from the plan than the status quo
  - Injustices – explain that the plan affects some individuals or groups more than others
  - Deny the supposed benefits of the plan
- If the affirmative neglected to present a plan, make a **HUGE** deal of its omission
- Clash. Counter all affirmative challenges directly and specifically
- Refute the affirmative case as a whole

**Conclusion**
- Summarize problems of the plan; say: *That is why we cannot adopt the resolution. Thank you.*

(5 MINUTE BREAK)

**REBUTTALS: Both sides (each side will have 10 minutes to moderate comments from the group)**

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU’RE ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE:**
- Clash: Refute the arguments introduced by the second affirmative, point by point
- Again attack affirmative’s justification for change
- Summarize the entire negative block
- End with instructions: *We must not allow . . .*

**WHAT TO DO IF YOU’RE ON THE AFFIRMATIVE SIDE:**
- Refute negative’s plan objections; point out fallacies in reasoning
- Rebuild your case at major points of attack; offer new evidence to support your contentions
- Clash. Respond to all the arguments from the second negative constructive arguments and first negative rebuttal; defend and resupport the arguments you can

(5 MINUTE BREAK)

**Second negative rebuttal speech (2 – 3 minutes) - last chance for the negative side to speak. YOUR TEAM MAY CHOOSE YOUR PRESENTER FOR THIS IN ADVANCE and you may write as a team.**
- Rebuild your case at major points of attack; offer new evidence to support your contentions
- Explain why your side should win: Review plan objections and disadvantages, refuting affirmative’s responses; point out any issues dropped by the affirmative
- Summarize the negative position in a dramatic way; call for rejection of the proposal
- Thank the audience and judge(s)

**Second affirmative rebuttal speech (2 – 3 minutes) - last speech! YOUR TEAM MAY CHOOSE YOUR PRESENTER FOR THIS IN ADVANCE and you may write as a team.**
- Point out any arguments dropped by the negative; these are considered your points now
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• Respond to objections negative made to your plan and point out those that were dropped by the second negative rebuttal; dropped arguments are conceded arguments!
• Remind the judges of your arguments and why they are more important than the negative’s
• Be dramatic in your big picture. Make your audience care! End with a strong appeal to adopt the resolution, to accept the proposal.
• Thank the audience and the judge(s)

How to Earn Points

+ 10 Turning in a hard copy of reference notes
+ 12 Just speaking at least once
+ 16 Speaking and referencing a text at least once…may be repetitive, vague, less certain, etc.
+ 20 Devastatingly intelligent comment and text reference at least once

BONUSES:
+ 5 Your side wins (five bonus points for all team members who spoke)
+ 2 Style points for great public speaking technique…eye contact, volume, poise, etc.

**TOTAL POINTS POSSIBLE: 30 (37, if you’re on the winning team and do an amazing job!)**