UNIT
5
Problem Solving
and Conflict
Management

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SUPPORTING YOUR VIEWS
Learning Objectives

After completing this chapter, you will be able to do the following.

• List the five common strategies for resolving conflicts.
• Practice the four techniques for negotiation.
• Give examples of the ways in which people participate in informal debate.
• Define basic debate terms.
• Prepare for and participate in an informal debate.

Speech Vocabulary

In this chapter, you will learn the meanings of the speech terms listed below.

- negotiation
- debate
- I-message
- avoidance
- accommodation
- competition
- compromise
- collaboration
- integrity
- informal debate
- proposition
- resolution

- affirmative
- negative
- status quo
- burden of proof
- argument
- case
- brief
- constructive
- refute
- rebuttal
- format
- flowsheet

Chapter Outline

Following are the main sections in this chapter.

1. The Art of Negotiation
2. Informal Debate
3. The Advantages of Debate
4. Debate Terminology
5. The Debate Process

Academic Vocabulary

Expanding your academic vocabulary will help you become a more effective communicator. Listed below are some words appearing in this chapter that you should make part of your vocabulary.

- barter
- alienate
- equitable
- rebuttal
- affirmative
- negative
- status quo
- burden of proof
- argument
- case
- brief
- constructive
- refute
- format
- flowsheet

- intimidation
- vouchers
- deficit

There is no polish without friction.

—Frederick Douglass
Introduction

We do not live in a perfect world. You will not always agree with everyone you meet in life. You can probably think of plenty of examples: the bully who won’t leave you alone, the parent who won’t let you stay out late enough, the boss who won’t give you a raise, and on and on.

Each of these situations creates a problem for you. Often you will be able to reach a solution through negotiation. **Negotiation**, at its best, is a cooperative relationship in which both sides want to reach an agreement. Sometimes, though, negotiation is less than cooperative. Therefore, you need a more formal method of solving problems. **Debate**, from a Latin word meaning “to battle,” is an important method of solving problems in a democracy.

In fact, the founders of the United States were highly skilled debaters. By the 1650s, most colonial colleges required debate as a means of training young scholars. For example, when Thomas Jefferson was a student at the College of William and Mary, he participated in debates. Jefferson was taught by George Wythe, the same debate coach who tutored such famous orators as Henry Clay and John Marshall. At the time, debate was considered to be the best way to develop the character and skills required of citizens in our young nation.

The challenge of learning to negotiate and to debate awaits you in this chapter. True, hard work lies ahead, but the rewards are significant. You will improve your ability to research and develop arguments, to organize your thoughts, and to speak extemporaneously. Moreover, you will be able to support your views.
Y
ou may think negotiation is not very impor-
tant to you. But just wait until you find your-
self haggling over the price of your first car. 
You’d better believe that the used-car salesperson try-
ing to sell you the latest lemon on the lot knows how
to negotiate. You should know what he or she knows, 
if only to protect yourself. But saving a buck is not the 
only reason to learn the principles of negotiation.

Why Negotiate?

Negotiation is not always about money. 
Certainly, learning negotiation skills can help you 
get pay raises, sell your home for more, even barter 
to borrow your neighbor’s lawn mower. More 
important, though, is the opportunity to improve 
your personal relationships. You, too, can win 
friends and influence people.

Suppose your best friend wants to borrow money 
from you. The amount he wants to borrow is more 
than you can afford, and your 
friend gets angry when you 
refuse to help him. Suppose your 
father insists that you wash the 
car every Saturday, but your 
older brother has no chores. 
Suppose your curfew is an hour 
earlier than for any of your 
friends. Clearly, for each of these 
situations, you need to develop 
ways to resolve a conflict. 
Conflict expert Dr. Kenneth 
Thomas has developed strategies 
for resolving conflicts, as out-
lined in the chart on page 458. It 
explains the strengths and weak-
nesses of various options for 
dealing with conflict.

Techniques of Negotiation

There is more to negotiation than getting your 
own way. You might want to avoid the strategy, 
recommended by Scott Adams’s comic strip charac-
ter Dilbert, of making the final suggestion in any 
meeting. This maneuver involves waiting until the 
allotted meeting time is almost up, when “patience 
is thin and bladders are full.” At this point, Dilbert 
says, offer your suggestion. Explain that your sugges-
tion is based on all of the good thoughts that 
have been presented at the meeting, “no matter 
how ridiculous they might be."

Perhaps more useful than Dilbert’s Final 
Suggestion Maneuver are these four techniques for 
effective negotiation:

1. Be Positive

Negative words can close the door to negotia-
tions. These words turn people off to your mes-
sage. These words limit, because they suggest
refusal and denial. Think, for example, how much you dislike it when someone tells you “no.” Jack Griffin, author of How to Say It at Work, has a list of 50 such words that you should avoid:

- I
- mine
- you
- yours
- afraid
- bad luck
- blame
- cannot
- cheated
- circumstances
- cornered
- crisis
- delay
- delinquent
- demand
- disaster
- excuse
- experiment
- fail
- fault
- fear
- final
- forgot
- frustrating
- guess
- hopeless
- impossible
- impractical
- inadequate
- insist
- loser
- loss
- lost
- make do
- must
- nervous
- no
- nonnegotiable
- one-time offer
- overloaded
- panic
- relax
- slipped
- sorry
- stupid
- tired
- unaware
- unfair
- unreasonable
- wasted

2. Use Three-Part Messages
Most of us rely heavily on I-messages, statements that emphasize what we want. Such messages can alienate people, and therefore can be counterproductive in negotiation. For example, saying, “Stop talking so I can get a...
word in edgewise!” will not bring you closer to a satisfactory resolution. If you were to attend a business seminar on negotiation, you would learn that two-part messages are more effective: “When you keep talking, it hurts my feelings.” Even better, though, is the three-part message advocated by Dr. Thomas Gordon, a leader in effectiveness training.

Using this pattern, a teacher might say: “When you don’t do your homework, I feel disappointed, because you don’t learn what you need to know.” The three-part message is an important tool in negotiation because both sides are forced to clarify the key issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>When you X</td>
<td>I feel Y</td>
<td>because Z</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Be Prepared
Aristotle once observed that “the way to achieve success is first to have a definite, clear, practical ideal.” Today, Aristotle might have said that you need an “ideal deal.” In other words, you have to define what it is you want. You shouldn’t ask the boss for a pay raise without having an amount in mind. Therefore, you must have the reasons for a raise carefully researched and documented. Do your homework. Know the facts before you open your mouth. Talking off the top of your head rarely impresses anyone.

It is wise to have alternatives in mind. You may not get exactly what you want in any negotiation. Be able to justify your best alternative. Suppose you make a case for being paid $10 each time you wash the car. If your father says you have to continue washing the car and he still refuses to pay you, you might want to offer an alternative. Perhaps your older sister could wash the car every other week. If not profitable, at least you could suggest that it’s equitable (fair).

Finally, you should know as much as possible about the position of the other party. Try to understand the “why” of his or her position. Perhaps your parents won’t extend your

I-messages seldom lead to satisfactory resolutions. In fact, they can alienate others.
A Cultural Crash Course

Negotiating with people from other cultures requires research and sensitivity. Consider this scenario, adapted from the book *BusinessSpeak* by Suzette Haden Elgin.

Chet Filmer and Leslie O’Connor were well aware that making a presentation to a group of seven Japanese executives would be a bit different. They’d been thoroughly briefed, and their boss had seen to it that they each got a long list of tips on doing business with the Japanese. They thought they were ready.

Chet and Leslie had designed a script that went with their slides. For each slide, they did three things: they carefully and courteously explained the theme of a painting, said a few words about the artist, and explained why the work was a perfect expression of one or more principles dear to the three Japanese firms represented. It took a while, but they were willing to give it all the time and care necessary. And then Chet took the last few slides—the ones that set out the necessary information about expenses, tax benefits, and other financial details—and wound up the session.

“There you have it, gentlemen!” he said in conclusion. “And now my associate and I would be happy to answer any questions that you might have.”

He waited through a long silence. The body language he was observing in his audience gave him no clues to their reactions; he couldn’t interpret it at all. “No questions?” he asked uneasily.

Chet was sure something was wrong. The first time he was able to get close enough to Leslie to check with her, he whispered, “What do you think?”

“I’m not sure,” she said softly, the smile on her face never wavering, “but I don’t have the feeling we were a smash hit.”

Leslie was on to something. In fact, the Japanese businessmen were offended. The Japanese executives in this scenario did not perceive the careful and explicit details in Chet and Leslie’s presentation as courtesy but as evidence that the two Americans found them lacking in both intelligence and sophistication. The Japanese expect adults to rely heavily on presupposed information when communicating with other adults. The emphasis on details made them feel as if they were being treated like children.

The lesson: Always be aware of cultural differences so that you don’t offend others.

Questions
1. Do both negotiating sides have a responsibility to adapt to cultural differences?
2. How would you research such differences?
Recalling the Facts

1. Name the three parts of the three-part message.
2. What does integrity mean?
3. What are five strategies for resolving conflicts?

Thinking Critically

Suppose that your school administration has decided to require all students to wear uniforms. It will let the students choose the type of uniform. In this section, you learned that it is easier to work with people than to work against them. And yet not all high school students get along with or even like each other. What are some things you could do to convince people who dislike each other to collaborate?

Taking Charge

1. Attend the next meeting of the student council or any other school organization. Which of the five approaches to negotiation did you see employed? How did the approaches used affect what was accomplished?
2. To learn how negative words can affect your message, write a brief speech trying to persuade the audience to take action on a particular issue. For example, ask them to donate blood. Incorporate as many of the 50 negative words from this section as you can.

Whether negotiating with your siblings or others, be prepared to state your position.
We have defined debate as a battle of ideas. When people disagree and each person puts forward an idea he or she thinks is superior, a debate is going on. Negotiation is a kind of informal debate. Informal debate is any debate conducted without specific rules. It’s an unstructured, open-ended discussion of opposing ideas.

Before we begin our study of formal debate, let’s take a quick look at some different types of informal debate. You may be surprised at how much you already know about debate and at how many debates in which you have already participated.

**Personal Debate**

You could say that people debate themselves all the time. This is the intrapersonal communication discussed in Chapter 1. When you have a personal problem, you consider alternatives as you try to solve the problem. Maybe you can’t decide whether to go out for the basketball team or the marching band. You like both, but the schedules conflict. There’s no way you can do both. In such a case, you might make a list of the pros and cons of both options. You might sit in your room and think to yourself, “If I went out for basketball, I’d get to hang out with all my hoop buddies, but I’d also have to put in a lot of hours of hard work—all that running every night. But if I joined the band, . . .” In cases like these, your mind is a battleground for opposing ideas. In other words, a silent debate is going on inside your head. Eventually, one side’s ideas will overpower the other’s, and there will be a winner. You engage in this kind of internal debate several times a week as you solve life’s everyday problems.

**Disagreements and Arguments**

You probably don’t need to be told what an argument is. Very few people go through life without getting into at least an occasional argument. Of course, there are all kinds of arguments—friendly ones, heated ones, serious ones, or amusing ones. All of these arguments are, in a sense, debates. They are battles between opposing ideas.
Your brother claims it’s your turn to mow the yard, but you say it’s his turn. You give your reasons and try to show your mother why his reasons don’t make sense. He does the same. In this case, there is a clash of ideas and a parent acts as a judge to determine whose reasons are better. Your skills as a debater may determine whether you lounge coolly in front of the computer surfing the Internet or strain and sweat behind the lawn mower. Later those same skills might help you persuade a boss to accept your proposal for a new project.

Group Discussion

Often, members of a group disagree about a course of action. In these cases, an informal debate occurs. Here’s an example. It’s a hot summer day, and you and several friends have decided to go swimming. The problem is that some of your friends want to go to the community pool, but some of them want to go to the lake outside of town.

How do you solve the problem? If only one person has a car and a driver’s license and that person is bigger and stronger than everyone else and always likes to get his or her way, the problem is solved. If, however, everyone has an equal say, the group will probably solve the problem by listening to the reasons different people give for going to the lake or the pool:

- The pool is closer.
- The lake is prettier.
- The pool water is cleaner.
- The lake water doesn’t have chlorine in it.
- There will be more boys (or girls) at the pool.
- They’ve got a great water slide at the lake.

This battle of ideas goes on for a while, and during the conversation more people begin to favor either the pool or the lake. The reasons for picking one solution tend to outweigh those for picking the other. Some members of the group argue more persuasively than others. Eventually, several people swing over to one side, and the problem is solved. The group as a whole has acted like a jury in deciding the outcome of this informal debate.

Organizations and Meetings

You probably belong to at least one organization that has meetings from time to time: your school class, Girl Scouts, a church committee, the athletic letter–winner club, Future Farmers of America, or the yearbook committee. Your meetings may be very informal, perhaps not much different from a discussion among a group of friends. In a larger organization, your meetings might be conducted according to the rules of parliamentary procedure (see Chapter 20). In either case, informal debate will occur as you and the other organization members discuss ways to solve problems.

Let’s say that your sophomore class needs to raise a great deal of money to finance next year’s prom. You’ve got several ongoing projects to raise money, but you’re looking for one big project for your sophomore year. One person has suggested an elaborate series of car washes every weekend over a six-month period, while another has recommended “selling” members of the class to local businesses. The businesses would then contribute money to your class based on the students’ work. Both ideas would require a lot of volunteer time.
from class members, so it’s not practical to do both. One idea must be chosen. A debate begins.

If you have a strong opinion as to which method would be more fun and interesting—and, of course, would raise more money—you may participate in the debate by giving reasons for or against one of the alternatives. Even if you don’t express an opinion in front of the group, you will probably participate in the debate as a judge, since the class will finally vote. Whether you speak or not, you will be participating in an informal debate.

A car wash is one common fund-raiser you might vote for or against at a school meeting.

**SECTION 2 REVIEW**

**Recalling the Facts**
1. Debate is a battle between ________________.
2. When you debate without specific rules, the process is described as ________________.

**Thinking Critically**
Working in pairs, observe each of your school’s clubs and other organizations. Contact the officers of each group to find out when it will have its next meeting and whether it would be all right for members of your class to attend as observers. The observers should report back to the class how much and what types of debate took place in the meetings. Discuss and evaluate what advantages might result from using formal debate procedures and skills.

**Taking Charge**
1. Make a list of the ideas you’ve debated with yourself over the past several days. Compare your list with your classmates’ lists. If any ideas appear on more than one list, discuss whether the debates led to the same conclusion.
2. Role-play an argument between siblings. First, brainstorm as a class to generate a list of common topics over which siblings disagree. Then role-play the situations, which could involve two to four siblings. Evaluate each situation to see if there were winners. If so, discuss which arguments or tactics proved most effective for the winners.
The Advantages of Debate

There are many ways in which you can benefit from studying and practicing debate. Becoming an accomplished debater will help you now and in the future. Here are just a few of the advantages of becoming a better debater and a better evaluator of debates.

**Career**

In many of the careers you might pursue after leaving school, you will encounter situations in which you may or may not be chosen to move up to a position of higher responsibility and pay. In those careers, your success will often depend on your ability to persuade people. Most of the workplace situations in which you’ll need to impress and persuade other people will involve some degree of debating skill. Managers and coworkers will challenge your opinions the way a debater is challenged. You’ll have to think quickly and improvise rather than rely solely on prepared remarks. You can begin developing all of these skills as a debater.

**Helping Others**

We all feel good when we can help other people. Think back to the class meeting example you read about earlier, when the class was deciding how to raise money for the prom. In that situation, the person who understands debate will be able to assist everyone in the class. How? By helping the class members focus on the key issues, by presenting the arguments for and against each alternative clearly and logically, and by helping the class evaluate those issues fairly.

In debate, you learn to narrow the issues so that they can be analyzed one at a time. You also learn how to present logical, well-supported arguments and how to find and point out errors in other arguments. All of these skills help everyone move closer to the truth and to the best solution for a problem. In so doing, you help everyone involved.

**As a Voter**

As you learn about debate, you will become a more and more effective evaluator of arguments. You will become a more analytical listener. If you listen to two political candidates debate, you’ll be better able to tell which is more prepared, more logical, and quicker thinking—all qualities that would help that person perform her or his duties successfully if elected. You will also become more knowledgeable about the candidates and thus be
International Debate

In 1992 Tim Averill planned to take his championship high school debate team from Manchester, Massachusetts, to London to celebrate the team’s twentieth anniversary. But while he was organizing the trip, his London contacts kept suggesting that Manchester represent the United States in the World School Debating Championships. Averill finally accepted the invitation, and Manchester joined twelve other countries to face off in London.

Some topics were sent to the debaters several months before the competition, and the remainder of the topics were announced with one and a half hour’s notice and prepared by the teams with no assistance from their coaches. The team from Manchester was assigned the following topics:

• This House believes that nuclear energy is worth the risk.
• This House believes that today’s heroes are hollow.
• This House would abolish all monarchies.

Manchester was also assigned the following topics, for which they had 90 minutes to prepare:

• Resolved: that this House welcomes the fall of Communism.
• Resolved: that this House would close down Hollywood.
• Resolved: that this House believes that the war against discrimination has been fought badly.

In international debating competitions, “the emphasis is upon ‘public persuasion,’” said Averill, “and the careful use of a relatively small amount of evidence.” Each team is encouraged to have an advocacy position, but it is the ethos of the individual speakers that determines the outcome; humor and wit are required and rewarded. Unlike policy debates in the United States, international debates focus more on the speakers’ own knowledge than on documentation.

The first World School Championship was held in 1988 in Australia, and six countries participated. Today, teams from around the world compete in the championship. The event is about more than debating; it’s about learning. According to Averill, “We had the opportunity to get to know students from all over the world, to share ideas and opinions, and to assess our educational system by comparison.” In 2008, the United States hosted the event for the second time.

Questions
1. Do you think the ethos of individual debaters should determine the outcome of debates? Why or why not?
2. What arguments might you have presented on the resolution to “close down Hollywood”?

Would you close down Hollywood?
able to make a more informed choice for the candidate you felt had the right ideas. As Thomas Jefferson argued, an informed electorate is necessary for a democracy to work.

**As a Citizen**

What are some of the “hot topics” at your school or in your community right now? Do you have strong feelings about any of these issues? If so, wouldn’t you enjoy standing up at a school board meeting or a city council meeting and clearly and logically pointing out to everyone there why your solution was preferable to the other solutions being offered? If challenged or attacked, wouldn’t you gain satisfaction from being able to respond to the challenge with several well-supported counterattacks? Even more important than your personal satisfaction would be the community service that would result from your informal debate efforts. When you feel strongly about an issue, you can help the members of your community by helping them choose the best solution to their problem.

**See It Again**

In March 1954, Edward R. Murrow, a prominent broadcast journalist, used his television series *See It Now* to debate Joseph McCarthy, the Wisconsin senator and Communist hunter. Pointing out contradictions in McCarthy’s statements and challenging his “facts,” Murrow invited McCarthy to respond.

On April 6, McCarthy responded on *See It Now* that Murrow was “the leader and the cleverest of the jackal pack which is always found at the throat of anyone who dares to expose individual Communists and traitors.” Throughout the broadcast, McCarthy used the very tactics—*innuendo, intimidation, and falsehood*—that Murrow had accused him of using. This second broadcast defined the characters of the two debaters. Wanting to be precise, Murrow read from a prepared text, while McCarthy made personal attacks on Murrow. McCarthy resorted to exaggeration; Murrow documented claims carefully.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson and David S. Birdsell, in *Presidential Debates*, conclude that “Had McCarthy not engaged Murrow in debate before a common audience, and in the process confirmed the charges he was attempting to dispatch, the damage to McCarthy’s credibility would have been less severe.”

By the end of 1954, McCarthy was condemned by other members of the Senate. His public support eroded, and McCarthy died in 1957 from health problems.
Recalling the Facts
1. Describe the ways that debate can help you in a career.
2. How can debating skills help you assist other people at your school?
3. How can understanding debate help you as a voter?
4. Explain how learning about debate will make you a better citizen.

Thinking Critically
1. Do you believe that debate can change the minds of people? Select a recent presidential campaign and research the debates between the candidates. If possible, obtain a transcript or a video of one of the actual debates. Re-create that debate for the class. Have class members vote for a candidate before the debate, and have them vote again after the debate. If opinions shifted, to what do you attribute those changes?
2. What do you think are the key skills that a good debater needs?
3. Why is it be important for a person who wants to be a good debater to keep up with current events?

Taking Charge
1. Attend a school debate competition. Afterward, give a brief speech on “What Excites Me About Debate” or “What Frightens Me About Debate.”
2. Choose a debate topic about which you have strong feelings. It could be a social issue that affects the entire country or an issue that is important in your school. Write down all of the arguments you would make to get people to agree with your views. Then write down all of the arguments that a person who disagrees with you might make.
Part of what confuses many students as they begin to learn about debate is the terminology. Debate has a language all its own. Many of the terms are not used anywhere except in debate, which means you might never have seen them before. So you may need to learn many new words in a hurry. It’s like trying to read Shakespeare for the first time, or learning chemistry. Of course, the terminology offered here is just an introduction to the world of debate. If you want to learn more, consider participating in interscholastic debate. Talk to the school sponsor for more information.

Once you learn the meanings of the new terms, you can proceed to the more fun and exciting parts of debate. Let’s take some time to study the terminology of debate so that we can then move on to actual debating.

**Proposition**

One of the most important debate terms is **proposition**. It is the statement of the point to be debated. It states a fact, a belief, or a recommendation to do something. Another way of explaining proposition is to say that it’s a formal way of stating an opinion. Here are some examples:

- The minimum age for drinking alcohol should be raised to 25. (a proposition of policy)
- Christopher Columbus discovered America. (a proposition of fact)
- Honesty is more important than friendship. (a proposition of value)

Debaters are very careful about the way they word their propositions. The reason for their concern is that each word in a proposition can have a major influence on what happens during a debate. You will learn more about good and bad wording for propositions later in this chapter.

**Resolution**

**Resolved** is a formal word used to introduce a proposition. It doesn’t affect the meaning of the proposition; it just introduces it formally. It does imply that careful thought went into stating the proposition in those exact words.

A proposition that begins with the word **resolved** is often called a resolution. A **resolution** is a formal statement of opinion. Here are some examples of resolutions. Note that they include the same
propositions used in the previous examples. The propositions have not changed in meaning; they are just more formally stated.

- Resolved: that the minimum age for drinking alcohol should be raised to 25.
- Resolved: that Christopher Columbus discovered America.
- Resolved: that honesty is more important than friendship.

**Affirmative and Negative**

*Affirmative* and *negative* are two words that you probably already know. *Affirmative* means “yes, or true”; *negative* means “no, or false.”

These terms are important in formal debate because every proposition is worded so that you must either agree or disagree with it. You say either “Yes, that is true” or “No, that is false.” During a formal debate, one side, called the affirmative side, tries to prove that the statement is true. The other side, called the negative side, tries to prove that it’s false. For example, in a debate of the proposition that the minimum drinking age should be raised to 25, the affirmative side would argue that, yes, it should be raised. The negative side would argue that, no, it should not be raised.

**Status Quo**

*Status quo* may sound more complicated than it really is. It is a Latin phrase that simply means “state in which”—that is, the way things are now, the existing conditions. The opposite of status quo is change. If every year for the last ten years your school has had a total enrollment of about 1,200 students, then an enrollment of 1,200 is the status quo. If next year the enrollment suddenly jumped to 2,000, that would be a change from the status quo. In formal debate, the negative side usually defends the status quo, arguing that there’s no need to change—that whatever exists now is what should continue to exist.

**Burden of Proof**

*Burden of proof* is a term used both in formal debate and in law to refer to the duty or responsibility to prove something. In a criminal trial, for example, the prosecution has the burden of proof. It’s the prosecuting attorney’s job to prove that the accused person is guilty. There is no burden of proof on the defense attorney. The defense attorney doesn’t have to prove that the accused person is innocent. According to the U.S. system of law, the accused person is “innocent until proven guilty.”

In formal debate, the burden of proof is on the debater arguing for the affirmative. He or she must prove that there is a problem with the status quo, so it should change. Just as the jury assumes the accused to be innocent until proven guilty, the debate judge assumes the status quo to be the best solution until it is proven otherwise.
Argument

You know what an argument is; you’ve probably had your share. In debate, the word argument has a meaning a little different from the one you’re used to. Debaters use the word argument to refer to a reason for favoring their side of a proposition. The argument also includes the facts that support that reason. Each debater goes into a debate with several arguments that he or she will try to use to win the debate.

Evidence

You also know the word evidence. As Chapter 10 pointed out, it refers to information that helps prove something. Fingerprints and eyewitness accounts are evidence in trials. Facts, statements, reports, and quotations from experts are examples of evidence used in debates. Each side tries to find as much evidence as possible to prove its side of a proposition.

Case

If you’ve watched courtroom dramas on television, you’ve probably heard the lawyers talk about “winning the case” or how they have “a great case.” These lawyers are using the word case much as formal debaters use it—to mean “the total group of arguments.” A case is a combination of all the debater’s ideas and evidence, organized to be as convincing as possible. Knowing that lawyers carry their written arguments in a briefcase may help you remember the meaning of this debate term.

Brief

Briefcase may also help you remember another term. Again, like lawyers, debaters talk about their briefs. A brief is what you might expect: something less than total, something that’s not complete. In debate, a brief is an outline of both the affirmative and the negative cases. Debaters use a brief as a guide and summary before and during a debate. The brief allows them to see all the relevant issues of the debate at a glance.

Constructive

The word constructive has a special meaning in formal debate. You can see in this adjective a clue to its meaning: the verb construct, which means “to build something.” In debate, constructive describes specific speeches that debaters make to build an argument for one side or the other. When debaters give constructive speeches, they are building or presenting their arguments.

Refute

To refute something means to show that it is wrong—to prove that something someone said is false. If someone said that your grandmother wears

A Cannon Loaded to the Lips

On January 26 and 27, 1830, Daniel Webster gave what some believe was the most powerful speech ever given in the U.S. Senate. He was rebutting a speech Senator Robert Hayne had given five days earlier. Webster and Hayne were debating whether the Western Territories should be opened to slavery and whether states could overturn laws passed by Congress. Hayne favored allowing the states to have this power, arguing for “Liberty first and Union afterwards.” Webster ended his speech, which lasted six hours, over the course of two days, by declaring, “Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable.” His speech helped convince Americans of the importance of a strong federal government. Perhaps essayist and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson best described Webster’s skill as an orator and debater when he called him “a great cannon loaded to the lips.”
You could select photos to help you reinforce an argument.

no shoes other than army boots, you could refute this by producing a photo of your grandmother in her house slippers. If your teacher said you hadn’t handed in your homework, but then you found it in her or his stack of homework papers, you would be refuting the statement.

An important part of formal debate is refuting your opponent’s arguments. You do this by offering evidence to show why your opponent’s statements are false. When you refute an argument, you are offering a refutation.

**Rebuttal**

A rebuttal is a speech that contradicts an earlier statement. The rebuttal tries to show that the earlier statement is wrong or false. Its meaning is similar to that of refutation. In formal debate, however, there is an important difference: refutation is the act of attacking your opponent’s argument; rebuttal is the act of countering your opponent’s attacks on your arguments so that you can rebuild your argument. Consider this example:

- You present an argument in your constructive speech: “People age 25 are more mature than people age 21, so there would be fewer accidents if we raised the drinking age from 21 to 25.”
- Your opponent refutes your argument: “There is no evidence to support the claim that 25-year-olds are more mature than 21-year-olds.”
- You rebut your opponent’s refutation: “In a study conducted by the psychology department at Harvard, 25-year-olds were shown to score significantly higher on maturation scales than 21-year-olds.”

### Section 4 Review

**Recalling the Facts**

1. What is the opposite of status quo?
2. What do you call an outline of both the affirmative and the negative cases?

**Thinking Critically**

Debaters take great care in defining the terms in a debate. Suppose you were debating the proposition “Resolved: that honesty is more important than friendship.” Does it make a difference how each debater defines friendship? Why or why not?

**Taking Charge**

Write ten propositions dealing with issues you’d like to see debated. Following each proposition, tell whom you would like to see debate it. For example, you might want to see a national high school debate champion and your mother debate the proposition “Resolved: that adults will no longer be allowed to limit the time their children spend watching television.” Be sure to begin each proposition with the word resolved. Make sure that each proposition is a yes-or-no statement.
Let’s now look briefly at how a debate works. We’ll outline the basic process so that you’ll have enough knowledge to conduct a debate in your classroom. Remember that if you want to participate in interscholastic competition, you should talk to the debate sponsor in your school. The sponsor will explain the two types of formal debate practiced in high school contests—Lincoln-Douglas debate and policy debate.

Getting Started

Of course, every debate begins with a topic. You need a problem, and you need a proposed solution to that problem (the proposition). While there are countless problems that could be debated, people often pick the more controversial issues. These are the topics about which many people on both sides of the issue feel strongly. Here are some broad issues that could serve as topics for debate:

- Changing the minimum driving age to 18 years old
- Uniforms in public schools
- Vouchers for public education
- The federal deficit
- Health-care legislation
- Penalties for driving while intoxicated
- Public employees’ right to strike
- Censorship of rock music
- Term limits for legislators

It’s not enough, however, to pick an issue. You can’t just choose one of the issues above and say, “Let’s debate.” To make the issue debatable, you must write a proposition in its proper yes-or-no form. Furthermore, the proposition must focus on one part of the issue, and it must be clearly worded so that there’s no confusion about what’s being debated.

The careful wording of a proposition is a key difference between debate and the heated discussions people sometimes get into. In those discussions, the arguments usually aren’t clearly focused on one definite part of an issue. Instead, everybody offers his or her own propositions, and people rarely take the time to define terms. That is why little progress is made in clarifying the issues or solving the problems in such discussions.

Here are some examples of poorly worded propositions:

- Resolved: that uniforms are bad.
  The language is vague (what does “bad” mean?), and it is not clear what is being proposed.

- Resolved: that the federal deficit should be reduced by raising taxes and cutting military spending.
  This states two different propositions, and you can’t debate two at once.

- Resolved: that the penalties for drunk driving are necessary.
  This proposes no change, and the proposition must clearly state a change from the status quo.

As soon as you have your proposition, you are ready to divide into teams. You need a team for the affirmative, a team for the negative, and a judge. It’s up to the affirmative team to prove the proposition.
The negative team defends the status quo and tries to discredit the proposition.

**Formats**

Several different formats are used for formal debate. **Format** refers to the procedure that will be employed to conduct a particular debate. The format specifies the order in which the debaters will speak and the amount of time allowed for each speech. The main purpose of establishing a format is to give both sides an equal opportunity to make their cases. Since the affirmative side is proposing change (arguing for the proposition), it speaks first and usually speaks last as well. For a classroom debate, you can devise whatever format you like, as long as the rules are clear ahead of time and fair to both sides.

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### Public Forum Debate

The most popular formats for formal debate are policy, Lincoln-Douglas (see chapter 19), and public forum. Rich Edwards, a professor of communication studies at Baylor University, cites three reasons for the rapid growth of public forum debate:

1. The topics are ripped from the headlines and change monthly.
2. The media focus on these headline topics helps lessen the need for complicated argument theory and debate jargon.
3. No special training is needed to judge such a debate.

This format works particularly well for classroom debates, because you can complete an entire round in 35 minutes. See the following time allocation for speeches:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Forum Debate Timing Schedule</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Speaker, Team A = 4 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Speaker, Team B = 4 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossfire = 3 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Speaker, Team A = 4 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Speaker, Team B = 4 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossfire = 3 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary: First Speaker, Team A = 2 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary: First Speaker, Team B = 2 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Crossfire = 3 Minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Focus: Second Speaker, Team A = 1 Minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Focus: Second Speaker, Team B = 1 Minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep Time (per team) = 2 Minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For an explanation of speaker duties and for tips on how to execute effective cross-examination techniques (for crossfire), consult the following Web sites or talk to your school’s debate coach.

- www.nflonline.org (National Forensic League)
- www.nfhs.com (National Federation of High Schools)

To get you started, here are three sample public forum topics:

- Resolved: use of a cell phone should be prohibited while operating a motor vehicle.
- Resolved: all young adults in every nation should be required to perform at least one year of national service.
- Resolved: the United States Constitution should be amended to establish a mandatory retirement age for Supreme Court justices.
Strategy

Following are a few general suggestions for preparing and arguing your case. Basically, you want to gather as much evidence as possible to support your case and to refute your opponent’s case.

- **Work hard.** Many debates are won or lost before they begin. Everyone on the team must work to gather evidence.
- **Anticipate.** In your research, you’ll come across evidence that will support your opponent’s arguments. Don’t overlook this information. Use it to anticipate your opponent’s arguments and then plan how you will respond.
- **Build a sound case.** Pick the three or four strongest reasons for your side of the proposition and support those reasons as best you can with strong evidence. Organize your case logically (refer to Chapter 10).
- **Listen.** Listen closely to what your opponent says. You want to find weaknesses in your opponent’s evidence and arguments. Remember to listen to what the evidence actually says, not what your opponent claims it says. For example, your opponent may make an illogical assumption based on his or her evidence. The fact that 10,000 seventeen-year-olds were killed in car accidents doesn’t by itself prove that the driving age should be raised to eighteen.
- **Take notes.** As the debate goes on, take careful notes to keep track of both your statements and your opponent’s. Formal debaters call their notes a flow-sheet.
- **Speak clearly and logically.** Organize your thoughts before you speak, so that you are sure to make your points. It’s important not to get too excited or rushed in your effort to refute your opponent’s arguments.

Recalling the Facts

1. What is the key difference between a formal debate and a heated discussion?
2. Give two examples of poorly worded propositions and explain why they create problems.

Thinking Critically

Students who participate in policy debate competitions learn that if the judge believes that the debate is a tie, he or she will vote for the negative team. Does this practice seem fair to you? Why or why not?

Taking Charge

1. As a class, pick the two or three most interesting topics from the list on page 473 and debate them in class.
2. As you prepare for the debates, keep in mind that the best debaters anticipate arguments from the opposing team. Take time to think of opposing arguments and how you would respond to them.
The Play’s the Thing  by Jasmine Barnsley

Students and parents often find themselves informally debating the value of competition. Jasmine Barnsley argues in excerpts from her speech that “the play’s the thing.”

It was a moment made for heroes: the 90,185 fans, the eerie stillness, and the final penalty kick to clinch a storybook series. When United States defender Brandi Chastain blasted the ball into the goal to win the women’s World Cup, the crowd erupted into celebration. And at home my nine-year-old cousin Bekah leapt off the couch, placed her hands on her hips and proclaimed, “I’m gonna be a professional soccer player when I grow up! You see, now that we won the World Cup, all of the girls will be famous and Nike will give them all sorts of money to be on TV—and did you see when that girl just took her shirt off? That’s what I want.”

And in our family, Bekah gets what Bekah wants. My aunt drives her to every soccer-related function. And Bekah is not only driven, she is “driven.” But she is not alone. How many of us have forgotten what Shakespeare once suggested, albeit in another context: “The play’s the thing.” We have become so concerned with what time the exercise class is, when the credit card bill is due, where the shorts that go with the uniform are, how we can get one kid to the ice arena and then the other across town in five minutes—or in my case, in Economics class, why everyone keeps laughing at that curve—that we simply don’t have time to revel in each moment.

Bekah, along with too many kids today, has forgotten what it means to play. The thing to them is winning, the thing to them is to be the next Brandi Chastain, the next Tiger Woods. Now I am not saying that we shouldn’t have dreams. But too many of us, in focusing on one dream, miss out on the joy that is present in each moment. Too many of us have forgotten how to play, and too many of us believe that when our dream doesn’t come true that F. Scott Fitzgerald was right: there are no second acts in America. But Fitzgerald was wrong. . . .

We can all learn from the man who was dying from Lou Gehrig’s disease in the book Tuesdays with Morrie. Morrie’s friend Mitch asks him if he could wave a magic wand and be given 24 hours to do whatever he wanted, what would his perfect day be. Morrie answers, “I would have a lovely breakfast, then I would go for a great swim, then I would have a simple lunch with my friends, and we would walk in the park and talk about how much we meant to each other. Then I would have a dinner at a place with great pasta and I would dance with my wife until I was exhausted.”

Mitch is taken aback by this response and says, “Seems pretty simple.” You see, what Morrie has figured out is that the best things in life are the simple everyday pleasures that we so often take for granted. These are the shining moments, and whenever I think of my own shining moments, I am always reminded of my grandma.

Grandma’s was not an easy life. She grew up in a small adobe “casita” near an irrigation ditch in Tularosa, New Mexico, among pomegranates, quince trees, and five brothers and sisters. Each day, from the moment she got home from school until she finally got her siblings into bed, she worked her hands raw. And yet, she became her high school’s first Hispanic valedictorian, and with that honor came a full college scholarship.

Unfortunately, though, her father became deathly ill and her family needed her more than ever. My grandma faced a difficult choice: to stay at home or to leave. So she made a promise to her father, a promise I was reminded of as I read the words of the poet Jimmy Santiago Baca, “Te prometi a ti y a todas las cosas vivas, que nunca te abandonaria.” (I promised you and all living things, I would never abandon you.)

You see, whether Bekah becomes the next Brandi Chastain or not, is not important. For the play, the show, must go on. It is what Bekah takes from each moment during soccer practice, at the games, or even the countless hours in the car with her mother. These will become Bekah’s shining moments, and that is a lesson I learned from my grandma: Mi abuela, nunca te abandonaria.
Looking Back

Listed below are the major ideas discussed in this chapter.

• Negotiation can be a cooperative relationship.
• The five common strategies for conflict resolution are avoidance, accommodation, competition, compromise, and collaboration.
• Four techniques for effective negotiation are be positive, use three-part messages, be prepared, and tell the truth.
• Debate is a method used to solve problems.
• You can help your career, help others, and help as a voter and citizen by becoming a better debater and a better evaluator of debates.
• Debatable issues must be stated in proper form to allow for a successful debate. A proposition must be worded so that it can be answered yes or no; it must focus on one part of an issue; it must be clearly worded; and it must not favor one side or the other.
• Several different formats are used to structure debates. The affirmative side usually speaks first and last.
• To be successful at debate, you must work hard, anticipate your opponent’s arguments, build a strong case, listen closely to your opponent’s arguments, take notes, and speak clearly and logically.

Speech Vocabulary

Match the speech term on the left with the definition on the right.

1. argument  
2. status quo  
3. case  
4. proposition  
5. negative  
6. refute  
7. debate  
8. negotiation  
9. affirmative  
10. rebuttal  

a. existing conditions  
b. problem-solving method that involves a battle of ideas  
c. yes  
d. statement of a point to be debated  
e. total group of arguments  
f. reason for favoring a particular side of a proposition  
g. show how something is wrong  
h. speech countering your opponent’s attacks on your arguments  
i. way of reaching a cooperative relationship  
j. no
Academic Vocabulary

Create a multiple choice definition question with three options (a, b, and c) for each of the academic vocabulary words. Example: Intensify means (a) to weaken, (b) to strengthen, (c) to enlarge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Definition Options</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>barter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>alienate</td>
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<tr>
<td>equitable</td>
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<td>innuendo</td>
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<td>intimidation</td>
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<tr>
<td>voucher</td>
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<tr>
<td>deficit</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To Remember

Answer the following based on your reading of the chapter.

1. What is the difference between negotiation and debate?
2. Name four broad areas in which learning about debate can be helpful.
3. What word is used to introduce a formal debate’s proposition?
4. What are the two sides in a formal debate called?
5. Find a word that means the opposite of status quo.
6. Is the negative side in a debate more like the prosecution or the defense in a court trial?
7. Does a debater’s case include his or her evidence, or does the evidence include the case?
8. Which comes first—a constructive speech or a rebuttal speech?
9. How many parts of an issue can be included in a properly worded debate proposition?
10. What is the main purpose of establishing a debate format?

To Do

1. If your television receives cable broadcasts of either local or national political proceedings (for example, on C-SPAN), record a debate. Bring the recording to your class. After watching it, analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the debaters involved.
2. Debates usually deal with the most serious, emotionally charged issues. Brainstorm with the class to create a list of the most trivial, unimportant issues possible. Then choose three or four of the least important issues to debate. Divide the class into two sides for each of the issues, and debate the propositions.
3. Survey the school population to find out what issues in your school and community concern students. Pick the three or four issues that most concern students, and schedule debates for each issue periodically throughout the school year. Assign different members of the class to alternating sides of the various issues, and then stage the debates at a scheduled school assembly. Have the student body vote for the winner in each debate. You may want to experiment with various formats. For example, in some debates, members of the student body could ask specific questions of each debate team.
To Talk About

1. Some people seem to enjoy arguments and have a flair for arguing. Are you one of those people? If so, why do you enjoy arguments? If you are not one of those people, why do you dislike arguments?

2. Have you ever held back in an informal debate during a meeting, even though you felt you had something important to say? Why did you hold back? What effect do you think your comments would have had on the discussion and its results?

3. Recall debates you have seen on television or at debate contests. Which speeches or qualities of the debaters impressed you the most?

4. When you are arguing with friends, do you usually get your way? If so, what strategies do you use to convince your friends? If you often lose arguments with friends, what strategies have you observed being used by the friend or friends who usually win?

To Write About

1. Write a short story two to four pages long. Write it in the third person, and have the main character be someone at a meeting. This character has something to say but is afraid to speak up. What happens?

2. Opportunities for argument present themselves constantly. As a rule, most of us either respond to an issue and debate it, as long as the other person is willing, or shy away from the confrontation. Write an essay explaining which course of action you believe to be better. If you think that the decision to debate an issue depends on the issue and its importance, give specific examples of issues that are worth debating and issues that aren’t.

3. Over the next few days, note debates that you have with yourself. Pick one of them and write the arguments that each side of you is presenting. Using two different names for yourself, write the debate as a back-and-forth discussion.

Related Speech Topics

The following list contains several potential topics for debates.

- The minimum voting age should be lowered from 18 to 12.
- Potential voters should be required to pass, with a score of 70 or above, a test covering the prominent issues in a given election year.
- Failure to vote in an election should result in a 5 percent increase in a qualified voter’s personal income tax for the 4 years till the next election.
- Loyalty to parents is more important than loyalty to peers.
- The experience gained from a part-time job is more valuable than the money earned in that job.