

Worksheet 15

BASIC DEBATE TERMS

In debating, there are some basic terms. Most of them are identical in different debate approaches, although sometimes the vocabulary differs. The following terms and their understanding are used in this Junior Debating approach:

▶ **DEBATE:**

A process (a kind of sports match) in which two opposing teams provide arguments to support their “position” and argue against that of the other team.

▶ **RESOLUTION:**

Also called: “motion” or “topic”. This is the issue about which the two teams disagree. A “resolution” is always controversial. The debate teams take two different “positions” through which they debate the “resolution”. The “pro” position is occasionally called the “affirmative side” or “proposition”, while the “contra” position is sometimes called the “opposite side” or “opposition”.

▶ **POSITION:**

This is the point of view/the opinion which a team takes in a debate. At times it is also called “claim”. It reflects one side of the “resolution”.

▶ **CLASH:**

These are the areas in which the two debate teams conspicuously disagree. The most emotional and interesting moments of a debate can be observed when the “positions” “clash”. “Clashes” often trigger a strong inner and outer dynamic. The young students’ resilience is tested, as well as their ability to remain respectful to their opponents in such heated situations. “Clashes” are therefore a rich source for teachers to reflect with their students on these experiences and to help them to learn.

▶ **ARGUMENT:**

This is a distinct point giving support to a “position”.

For Junior Debating the A-R-E+L – Model is used, which consists of the following elements: an “assertion”, “reasoning”, and “evidence”. It concludes with a “link-back” to the “assertion”.

▶ **ASSERTION:**

This is the first element of an “argument”. It mirrors the “position”.

▶ **REASONING:**

This is the second element of an “argument”. Sometimes it is called “warrant”. It is the logical basis on which an “argument” is built. It answers to the question “why?”.

▶ **EVIDENCE:**

This is the third element of an “argument”. It supports the “reasoning” of the “argument”. Different types of “evidence” can be used in an “argument”. “Evidence” can broadly be divided into two categories: “facts” (data, statistic, studies, polls) and “examples” (narratives, life experiences).

▶ **LINK-BACK:**

This is the fourth element of an “argument”. It concludes an “argument” by linking the “reasoning” and the “evidence” to the over-all “position” of the team.

▶ **COUNTERARGUMENT:**

Also called “rebuttal” or “refutation”

It explains why a team disagrees with the “arguments” of the other team.