

Build a Debate– Teaching Strategy

Quick Overview

Students start by clearly stating a historical claim, then provide two pieces of evidence that support their argument. Students explain how each piece of evidence connects to their claim using logical reasoning. This strategy promotes responsible argumentation by guiding students to support claims with evidence and explain their reasoning through respectful academic dialogue.

Skill Objective

Students will...

- Understand how to create a clear and convincing argument backed with evidence and reasoning.

Content Objective

Students will...

- Craft an evidence-based argument to back up a claim about a historical topic.

Civics Skills Connection

Dialogical/Collaborative learning:

- **Deep thinking:** Students engage with primary and secondary sources
- **Verbal sharing/engagement:** Students construct arguments

Prep ahead

- Choose a historical time period, event, or issue for students to craft a historical claim around.
- Provide background information, or primary and secondary sources for information gathering by students.
 - Provide or approve research sources students will use (e.g., articles, textbook pages, primary source excerpts).
 - Ensure students understand key historical or topical context before writing.
- Print out enough copies of the Build a Debate handout for each student or pair.

Strategy Steps

This strategy is most effective after students have engaged with historical content and sources and are ready to transform knowledge into evidence-based claims, particularly during inquiry, pre-writing, or discourse-focused lessons.

1. Distribute the Build a Debate handout and tell students they will analyze the model as a class.
2. To analyze the model together, break down each part of the debate organizer:
 - Claim
 - Evidence
 - Reasoning
 - Overall reasoning/importance
3. Provide time for students to research through the approved resources that were prepared.
4. Students complete the graphic organizer based on their debate content.

Customizations

- **Option 1: Review it**
 - After each step on the organizer (claim, evidence, reasoning, overall reasoning/impact) give feedback to students or have student's peer edit
- **Option 2: Share it**
 - Students are partnered with opposing points of view to take turns sharing their viewpoints with the class
- **Option 3: Assess it**
 - Educator collects the Build a Debate handout and reviews the required sections for a create a clear and convincing argument backed with evidence and reasoning.
 - If students present their debate to the class, the educator can assess the student's argument while it is being delivered.
- **Option 4: Respond to it**
 - After listening to a pair of classmates present their debate topics, students respond in writing.
 - Summarize each perspective
 - Speaker A's main claim
 - One key piece of evidence
 - Speaker B's main claim
 - One key piece of evidence
 - Compare the arguments
 - One point where the arguments differ
 - One point where they overlap or address the same issue
 - Which argument was more convincing and why? Use at least one specific example from each speaker.