

The Crucible – Debate

Below are five debate topics. The class is to break into **groups of 3 – 4** (groups of 2 or 5 are NOT acceptable). Each group is to **choose a topic below (1-5) and a side of the topic (a or b) to debate on**. As soon as you've found your group, write each member's first and last name on a piece of paper as well as the topic and stance you want to debate on (for example, 3b). Turn your paper in to me. I will accept it on a first come first serve basis, so be prepared to have a backup plan, in case your choice is already taken.

Once you have your assignment, **find the group you will be debating** and come up with at least **four sub arguments** to debate on (two for each group). Next, get together with your group and **research as many facts as you can for the two sub arguments your group will argue**. Also, **research the sub arguments your opponents will be arguing**, so a group member will be able to refute each of your opponent's arguments. Finally, **each group member will choose a sub argument to debate on against his/her opponent from the other team in front of the class**. Therefore, two group members will be doing the arguing, while two will be doing the refuting. Each group member should be extremely well versed in the answer of his/her particular sub argument. During the debate, the "a" side goes first on the odd numbered sub arguments. The "b" side goes first during the even questions. For an example of the debate structure, please see the backside of this page.

1. Some say the Puritans were "too religious" and this behavior led to the Salem Witch Hunt. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?
 - a. Agree, they are "too religious;" this caused the witch hunt.
Vs.
 - b. Disagree, they are not "too religious;" that is not why the witch hunt occurred.
2. Do you think the Salem Witch Hunt could have been prevented?
 - a. Yes, it could have been prevented
Vs.
 - b. No, there is no way to prevent it.
3. The main hero of this play is debatable. Who is the hero?
 - a. John Proctor (or pick your own)
Vs.
 - b. Rebecca Nurse (or pick your own)
4. The main villain of this play is also debatable. Who is the villain?
 - a. The main villain is Abigail (or pick your own)
Vs.
 - b. The main villain is Reverend Parris (or pick your own)
5. Why were Betty and Ruth acting the way they did during Act I?
 - a. Faking it
Vs.
 - b. Ergotism

Examples of support arguments and structure of debate:

Main Argument: Why were Betty and Ruth acting the way they did during Act I?

1. 1a. (They were faking because) _____.
<facts to back this up>
(Now group 1b refutes their opponent's argument)
(Now group 1a gets to defend their position again) – *repeating does no good*
(Group 1b gets the final word)
End of that segment of the debate... (If a group member can't refute the statement or has nothing left to say, he/she will say pass and forfeit his/her turn)
(This back and forth will go on 4 times.)
2. 1b. (It was ergotism because) _____.
<facts to back this up>
(Now group "1a" gets a chance to refute group "1b's" argument)
(Now group "1b" gets to defend their position again)
(Group "1a" gets the last word to refute group 1a)
3. 1a. (They were faking because) _____.
<facts to back this up>
(Now group 1b refutes their opponent's argument)
(Now group 1a gets to defend their position again) – *repeating does no good*
(Group 1b gets the final word)
4. 1b. (It was ergotism because) _____.
<facts to back this up>
(Now group "1a" gets a chance to refute group "1b's" argument)
(Now group "1b" gets to defend their position again)
(Group "1a" gets the last word to refute group 1a)

END OF DEBATE #1

The same format will be followed for all the debates.

-Each group is required to turn in a written copy of their debate. This does not have to be exactly what is said during the debate, but I want to see your arguments down on paper. You will be graded as a group - based on your written work - and as an individual, based on your performance during the debate. The assignment is worth 40 points.

-The rest of the class will be the judges. They will listen intently and award a point whenever a valid argument is made. Do not give points for repeat arguments. Be fair! *Award points for the quality of the argument, not because the debater is your friend.*

-My role in this will be the judge. If someone gives incorrect information, I will call him/her out on this. In such an occurrence, all the judges will deduct a point. Points may also be deducted for talking out of turn or other disruptions to the debate.

-I will tally up all the points for each side after class. During the next class period, I will announce the four winning teams. The losing team will each chip in to pay for the pizza party we will have at a later date. I will provide the drinks, plates, and cups.

*The pizza party can and will be cancelled if I don't feel the class put a good honest effort into this project.