

Formal debating phrases



Opening the debate:

- [some nice opening, e.g. quote]
- Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to this debate.
- Welcome from this side of the house...
- The motion for debate today is: ...

Defining the motion:

- Now we as today's proposition/opposition strongly believe that this is true/not true, but before we come to our actual argumentation, let us first define some important terms in this debate.
- We believe that what is meant by ... is... / that ... are ...
- When we say ... should ... we mean that ...

Presenting the teamline:

- We as today's proposition/opposition have structured our case as follows:
- I, as the first speaker, will be talking about ...
- Our second speaker, ..., will elaborate on the fact that ...
- And our third speaker, ..., will do the rebuttal.

Rebutting arguments, rebuilding your case:

- But before I come to my own arguments, let us first have a look at what ... has said.
- I will continue our case in a minute, but before that there are some things about the ... speech that need to be addressed.
- The first prop/opposition speaker has told us ...; on the contrary ...
- He/She also said that ...; but in fact..
He/She was claiming that ...; but as my first speaker already told you, ...

Introducing arguments:

- Let me come to my first/second/.../next argument: [concise label of argument]
- My first/... argument is:
- The first/... reason why we're prop/opposing this motion is: explaining arguments:
- [rather abstract explanation on how the argument should work]

Giving examples:

- There are many examples for this/for ..., for instance.
- In fact, you can find many examples for this in real life. Just think of...
- And there are similar cases, such as ..., ...
- So in this simple example we can clearly see the effect of ...

Summarizing & linking the argument:

- So as we have seen [argument label], and therefore [motion].
- Now because of this ..., we have to support this motion.

Summarizing & ending your speech:

- So Ladies and Gentlemen, what have I told you today? Firstly ..., Secondly..
- [some nice closing words]
- And for all of these reasons, the motion must stand/fall.

making/rejecting/accepting/answering points of information:

- Point of information, Sir/Madam.
- On that point.
- Wouldn't you have to agree ...? / Doesn't what you're saying contradict with ...? / What about the ...? / How would you explain, that ... ?
- No, thank you, Sir/Madam.
- Declined.
- Yes, please. / Go ahead.
- Thank you very much, Sir/Madam, I'm going to come to this very point in my second argument in a minute.

Giving reply speeches:

- Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome for the last time from today's prop/opposition. It is now my pleasure to summarize this debate, take a look at what both sides have said and see what the outcome of this debate actually is.
- A first/second/... major clash was: ... Today's prop/opposition told us ...; we had to find ...
- [some particularly nice closing words]
- And for all these reasons, I beg you to prop/oppose