

5 Tips for Administering a Classroom Debate:

1. **Use a moderator:** The teacher should act as a moderator who will select the order students will speak in, control the discussion and ensure that each student has a chance to speak
2. **Set the right tone:** The atmosphere of the debate should be formal but comfortable. Students should take their side seriously and endeavour to speak clearly and pay attention to the arguments being discussed. They should not be required to stand or make gestures which will make them uncomfortable, nor should they be prompted to speak at any particular time.
3. **Write notes:** Every student should be taking their own notes throughout the debate, how detailed they are should be their decision. A recorder (perhaps the teacher) should also keep track of the arguments being made on both sides and the responses to them.
4. **Prepare the group thoroughly:** A debate will only work if the students have knowledge of the subject they are debating. Students must be provided with resources and allowed to do research to become better informed before the debate occurs. Students should be integrating that knowledge into their arguments, not throwing ideas out with no support.
5. **Know when to end the discussion:** Consensus is unlikely to develop at any point during the debate. When the arguments become reiterative and it is clear there has been sufficient chance to contribute, the debate must conclude. This can be done through either a class-wide vote or the decision can be made by an appointed adjudicator.