

CAMEROON DEBATE ACADEMY EXERCISES

Alfred Snider, World Debate Institute

Here are some exercises for use during our long sessions we have with students following lectures. Feel free to use these exercises or exercises of your own. But, these have worked in the past.

Guidelines:

- Short speeches. This allows time for feedback and repeats.
- Feedback. Give it during and after any action by them. You might also appoint other students to give feedback as well. Mix positive and negative feedback.
- Have students do something over again after they receive feedback if you have time.
- Use the motions supplied. This will help them prep for practice debates and the tournament. Or, use motions you think of.
- Watch for differently abled students. Give them easier motions, encourage them more, etc.
- Try and make it fun.
- Watch time carefully to make sure all students get the same chances.

Motions for Exercises: or use your own – MORE AT

<http://globaldebate.posterous.com/>

THBT = This House believes that...

THW = This House would...

1. THBT Modern technology has done more harm than good to the Cameroonian youth. *
2. THBT Examinations are not a true test of knowledge. Or THBT TESTING IS THE ENEMY OF LEARNING *
3. THBT Traditional succession should be limited to male children .
4. THBT Democracy is a hindrance to development in Cameroon. *
5. THW Ban international adoption. *
6. THW Ban single sex schools *
7. THBT Crimes committed by police should be punished more severely. *
8. This house would enforce a no-fly zone over Syria. *
9. THBT We should not give money to beggars. *
10. THW Legalize multi-partner marriages for both men and women*
11. This house would not have made public the extent of public embezzlement in Cameroon.
12. THBT The UN should hire Private Military Contractors for its military operations.
13. THBT Abortion should be legalized.
14. THW Require politicians to send their children to public schools.*
15. THW implement a one child policy in countries where the average age is very low.*

16. THW Allow wildlife refuges to sell valuable animal parts.*
17. THW End compulsory education in developing countries. *
18. THBT African Union states should stop cooperating with the ICC.*
19. THBT Cameroon will have a bright future.
20. THW recognize that animals have some rights.
21. THBT Cameroon should diversify its economy away from dependence on agriculture.
22. THBT Western Cameroon should be an independent state.
23. THBT Cameroon should adopt 8 year term limits for all national elected officials.
24. Voting should be obligatory.
25. We should lower the voting age to 16.
26. Representative democracy has failed us.
27. Invalidate any election result with a turnout below 70%
28. Allow minors who pass a test on civics to vote
29. Parents should have access to their children's social networking sites.
30. This house believes that zoos should be eliminated
31. This house believes that elective cosmetic surgery should be banned
32. This house believes that doctors should never lie to their patients, including one for their own good
33. Allow companies to refuse hiring smokers
34. This house believes that people sentenced to life imprisonment should be allowed to choose the death penalty instead
35. Criminalize the payment of ransom
36. Ban boxing
37. Parents should not be allowed to hit children
38. Have harsher sentences for celebrity criminals
39. Public money should not be used to finance art
40. We should be willing to negotiate with terrorists
41. Nationalism is a virtue
42. Child abusers should not be allowed to have more children
43. Every citizen should be provided with internet access

TITLE: WARM UP SPEECHES AND MORE (INEXPERIENCED)

GOALS:

Get over the nervousness of initial speaking.
Discover students that have serious speech anxiety problems.
Discover students with serious difficulties with English.
Identify significant problems and work on them.

PROCEDURES:

Explain that this will be a safe environment for learning.

ROUND ONE: Students give one-minute speeches

Give all students a topic, something safe:

- Favorite pet animal
- Favorite vacation spot
- Best friend
- Least favorite media figure
- Worst movie ever seen
- “I wish my parents would....”
- “I wish my university would...”
- Favorite subject in school
- Favorite sport
- Gadget they most want

After each speech tell them two things they did well and one thing they need to improve on in their next speech.

ROUND TWO: Students speak on a motion for two minutes

Put students in pairs. Then give each pair a motion, making one student prop and one opp.

Give them 5 minutes to prepare **one** major argument for their side. Tell them to remember what they need to work on from their previous speech.

Have them give their two minute speeches, have the other side take notes.

Give them feedback, be positive, but notice whether they improved on their previous challenge.

Have their partner also make comments.

Each pair gives their speeches.

ROUND THREE: If you have time, give them 3 minutes to prep a one-minute answer to what the other side said.

Each pair speaks.

After each pair, give feedback to them.

CAUTIONS:

Be alert for those experiencing a lot of speech anxiety, shyness, etc.

BUT, make people speak, then show support for them, “I knew you could do it...”

Talk about improvement, it is all that is important, just get better.

TITLE: ARGUMENTATION EXERCISES

GOALS:

To help students apply the types of arguments to real arguments they will find.
To help students apply the tests of argument types to actual arguments.

BACKGROUND:

Induction: arguments proven by specific instances.

Tests: not enough examples, atypical examples, negative examples are better.

Deduction: arguments proven by general concepts

Categorical: what is true of one in a category is true of all

Tests: not in that category, not a real category, not true of all in that category, only true of some in that category.

Disjunctive: there is a choice; one is better than the other.

Tests: There are more choices, the suggested choice is bad, the rejected choice is good, and you can do them both.

Hypothetical/Causal: one thing leads to another.

Tests: factor does not have the causal power, may not always cause, there are other causes, counter causes exist to stop it, effect is actually good.

PROCEDURES:

Look over the arguments in advance and mark ones you like. Do not use arguments that do not appeal to you.

Have students identify which kind of argument it is, state whether they accept it, and then critique what is wrong with it. If you want, ask students to tell you how they would fix this argument, although it may not be possible.

CAUTION:

Many arguments have multiple problems, and some may have none.

SAMPLE ARGUMENTS:

Many students are finishing their education and cannot find employment. So, we need to increase education spending.

DEDUCTION – CAUSAL/HYPOTHETICAL

Because of youth unemployment we should focus education on training people for the jobs that exist now or else not bother educating them at all.

DEDUCTION – DISJUNCTIVE

Young people are having a hard time getting jobs; it really is their own fault for not being better prepared for work.

DEDUCTION – CAUSAL

Online activism is a key to a better world. Why, just look at the way it has helped solve problems like drugs, human trafficking and the use of child soldiers in Africa.

INDUCTION

Online activism teaches people that they can make a difference, and thus makes them better citizens.

DEDUCTION – CATEGORICAL

USA & Russian governments met with space aliens and it cannot be disproved.

FALLACY: APPEAL TO IGNORANCE

Our leaders know what is good for us, so we should follow them.

DEDUCTION: CAUSATION

The Democratic Party is the party that will lead our nation into being a better democracy.

DEDUCTION: CAUSATION

FALLACY: NAME IS NOT REALITY

We can either raise taxes or cut other programs if we want to spend money to improve medical care.

DEDUCTION – DISJUNCTIVE

FALLACY: FALSE CHOICE

You cannot trust a politician with a nose as long as hers.

DEDUCTION: CATEGORICAL

FALLACY: PERSONAL ATTACK

We can never make strongly Catholic countries recognize full rights for homosexuals.

DEDUCTION – CATEGORICAL

If so many people vote for the Center Coalition Party, they must be the best.

DEDUCTION: CAUSATION

FALLACY: APPEAL TO POPULARITY

If we tax environmentally harmful products more, then people will buy them less.

DEDUCTION – CAUSAL/HYPOTHETICAL

If we tax environmentally harmful products, governments will use that tax money wisely to reduce problems in the environment.

DEDUCTION – DISJUNCTIVE

FALLACY: WISHFUL THINKING

Generosity is a virtue, so the middle class should give all they have to the poor.
DEDUCTION: CAUSATION
FALLACY: REDUCING AN IDEA TO ABSURDITY

Public funding of sports programs in bad economic times is a waste of money.
DEDUCTION – DISJUNCTIVE

If we remain united we cannot fail.
DEDUCTION: CAUSATION
FALLACY: APPEAL TO EMOTION

Sports only benefit those who actually play not those who watch and cheer.
DEDUCTION – CATEGORICAL

If universities were free of charge, people would go to university instead of getting jobs.
DEDUCTION - DISJUNCTIVE

A society in which everyone has a university education will be a better society.
DEDUCTION – CAUSAL
FALLACY: WISHFUL THINKING

Mother Cameroon needs her children to protect her now because Father Europe is mistreating her.
DEDUCTION: CAUSATION
FALLACY: PERSONIFICATION

Member of Parliament X is supported by the major labor unions, so we know his policies are bad for corporations.
DEDUCTION: CATEGORICAL
FALLACY: FALSE CHOICE

In young people really love their home countries; they should not immigrate to other parts of Africa.
DEDUCTION – CATEGORICAL
FALLACY: APPEAL TO EMOTION

Chinese culture is very different from AFRICAN culture, so we cannot hope to live in harmony with China.
DEDUCTION: CAUSAL
FALLACY: CULTURAL BIGOTRY

Those who discriminate against sexual minorities should be discriminated against.
DEDUCTION – CATEGORICAL
FALLACY: POINTING TO ANOTHER WRONG

The Parliament has passed bad legislation before, so we cannot trust it to pass new legislation.
INDUCTION
FALLACY: DEMAND FOR PERFECTION

Government borrowing and then spending that money is good for the economy because it stimulates economic activity.
DEDUCTION - CAUSAL

The Italian government is freely elected and democratic, therefore if they want to spend more money than they collect they should be able to.
DEDUCTION - CATEGORICAL

Because there are so many intelligent economists in Europe, they will find a solution to the current economic crisis.

DEDUCTION – CAUSAL

FALLACY: WISHFUL THINKING

Poverty caused by the economic system is the biggest crime. Therefore, crimes committed by poor people should be punished less than crimes of rich people.

DEDUCTION – CATEGORICAL

FALLACY: POINTING TO ANOTHER WRONG

When Cameroonian citizens are very afraid, they often make bad political decisions.

DEDUCTION – CAUSAL

FALLACY: APPEAL TO EMOTION

Future wars in Africa will be less likely if we have one common history book to teach all students from.

DEDUCTION – CAUSAL

FALLACY: WISHFUL THINKING

A system that has economic freedom will have political freedom as well.

DEDUCTION – CATEGORICAL

FALLACY: FALLACY OF COMPOSITION

Because corporations can use the Internet more effectively than individuals, it represents a threat to individual freedom.

DEDUCTION – HYPOTHETICAL/CAUSAL

FALLACY: SEIZING A TRIVIAL POINT

Students who can pay for a university education should pay more, those who cannot afford it should pay less.

DEDUCTION - CATEGORICAL

Rich people are smart.

DEDUCTION – CATEGORICAL

FALLACY: NON SEQUITUR

63% of police investigations are carried out legally. This is a record the police should be proud of.

INDUCTION

Europe was the winner in World War 1, World War 2 and the Cold War. Thus, Europe will win future wars as well.

INDUCTION

FACTUALLY INCORRECT

Bankers who loaned money to countries who had weak financial performance should be held responsible when those countries cannot repay the loans.

DEDUCTION - CATEGORICAL

DSK, a well-known European financial executive, has been accused of sexual offenses many times but has never been convicted. This proves he was innocent all along.

INDUCTION

TITLE: MOTION ANALYSIS/FUN WITH MOTIONS
WE WILL DO THIS

GOALS:

To teach students how to brainstorm by themselves on complex motions.

To teach them how to select the best arguments and arrange them.

To allow students to learn from the motions other students are working on.

To help them find forms of support for their arguments.

Students will have accomplished a basic briefing of every motion you deal with.

Help students discover good arguments to use on a variety of motions.

PROCEDURES:

PHASE ONE: Build Cases

Put students into groups of two Give each pair a motion, and you assign them as prop team. Allow them to have ten minutes to think of their best three arguments, Have them present their ideas (not as a speech, but in a discussion) for five minutes, including if they are prop: definitions (if needed), model (if needed) two arguments for first speech, third argument for second speech. **Make sure everyone is taking notes about all motions.** You make comments, allow a very few from the other students. Make concrete suggestions for how to improve.

PHASE TWO: Better Cases

Give students five minutes to make adjustments, and then present their basic ideas again, BUT also including examples and other forms of support they would use. After each presentation, have students suggest other examples or forms of support they might have used.

CAUTIONS:

Watch for two arguments that are the same, most obvious argument first, most subtle argument third.

Watch your time allocation to make sure you at least get through phase one.

TITLE: POINTS OF INFORMATION

GOALS:

Develop strong Pol offering skills.

Develop strong Pol replying skills.

Make students search for arguments, and thus points to pose, on a variety of motions.

PROCEDURES:

Give each student a motion. Have them outline a very brief first prop or opp speech in about 7-8 minutes of prep. Then, have a student stand up and speak on this motion, but after one to one and a half minutes you pound the table and all in the room start offering points of information. The speaker **MUST** take all points from a variety of students. It is the responsibility of all students to pose points to the speaker. Your role is to be the audience, and make sure to be active. Point out things like: question too long, question too easy, answer too long, weak answer, answer not scoring points for their aide, etc. Feel free to interject these comments during the speech, but do not let others do so. Make speeches long enough so that you use all the time and everyone gets to speak. If they behave to speak for nine minutes taking points for eight of them, fine. It will make them stronger. You can also feel free to offer points, but try and model good practice and behavior.

CAUTIONS:

Always make sure to maintain decorum, no flagging of points or inappropriate behavior.

Watch the time; calculate how long speeches can be before the first one is given based on the time left and how many students are in your group.

TITLE: REFUTATION

GOALS:

Teach them how to refute the important stuff only.

Teach them to use the right structure: 4 step: they say, we disagree, because, therefore.

Teach them to do it quickly and efficiently.

PROCEDURE:

1. Refute a case: pick a motion they analyzed previously, and then give them 5 minutes to prepare to refute a first speech. Have them refute it in a 3 minute speech.
2. Then, after discussion, have them do it in 2 minutes if you have time.