

# **Instructional Module 3: At – A – Glance**

## **Maintaining and Defending Arguments**

### **Overview**

In this module, students will read a letter, several speech excerpts, and an excerpt from an essay about issues important to American Indians. They will identify authors' positions, purposes, claims and assertions, evidence, and use of rhetorical devices in these texts. Students will also evaluate the arguments in each text in peer-led instructional conversations, considering the background of each Native American speaker and the historical context.

### **Standards Addressed**

**R 2.8** Evaluate the credibility of an author's argument or defense of a claim by critiquing the relationship between generalizations and evidence, the comprehensiveness of evidence, and the way in which the author's intent affects the structure and tone of the text (e.g., in professional journals, editorials, political speeches, primary source material).

**SA 2.5** Deliver persuasive arguments (including evaluation and analysis of problems and solutions and causes and effects):

- a. Structure ideas and arguments in a coherent, logical fashion.
- b. Use rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., by appeal to logic through reasoning; by appeal to emotion or ethical belief; by use of personal anecdote, case study, or analogy).
- c. Clarify and defend positions with precise and relevant evidence, including facts, expert opinions, quotations, expressions of commonly accepted beliefs, and logical reasoning.
- d. Anticipate and address the listener's concerns and counterarguments.

### **Teacher Resources**

#### **Texts**

- Part 1 – “Memorial and Recommendations of the Grand Council Fire of American Indians”
- Part 2 – “Speeches of Chief Joseph” and “Chief Seattle’s Speech”
- Part 3 – “Chief Illiniwek: Dignified or Damaging?” by Joseph P. Gone

#### **Graphic Organizers**

- Using and Evaluating Appeals as Persuasive Rhetorical Devices
- Evaluating a Persuasive Essay

#### **Additional Resources**

- Rhetorical Devices
- Power of the Spoken Word
- Organize Your Debate Information and Conduct the Debate

### **Culminating Tasks**

1. After reading several models, students will write and present original speeches that include elaborations, counterarguments, and the use of rhetorical devices. Students can research an issue in small groups, each taking a different position for the speech, with several topics or issues explored in each class. Peers will evaluate the content, structure, and language of the speeches during the oral presentation.
2. Students will participate in a debate on a proposition using one of the following formats: town hall meeting, panel approach, or single moderator method. Students will learn to ask and answer both planned and spontaneous questions and present constructive and rebuttal speeches on either the affirmative or negative side of a resolution. Peers will evaluate the content, structure, and language of the speeches and questions during the debate.

## Instructional Module 3: At – A – Glance

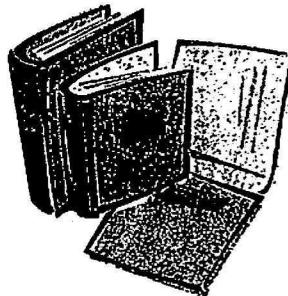
### Text Summaries

**Summary of “Memorial and Recommendations of the Grand Council Fire of American Indians”:** In this letter, the council urges the mayor of Chicago to include a fair representation of the struggle for American Indian independence and territory and their rich legacy and culture in school textbooks and in the teaching of American history.

**Summary of “Speeches of Chief Joseph”:** In these speech excerpts from the late 1870s, Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce speaks about the unequal and unfair treatment of American Indians at the hands of white men and the government, his tribe’s surrender at the Canadian border, and his tribe’s right to live on their native land.

**Summary of “Chief Seattle’s Speech”:** In this translated speech published in 1887 but believed to have been presented in 1854, Chief Seattle of the Suquamish people responds to the government’s offer to have his people live on a reservation.

**Summary of “Chief Illiniwek: Dignified or Damaging?”:** In this excerpt of a 1995 essay, Joseph P. Gone, a professor of psychology at the University of Michigan who is Native American, explains his position that the mascot of the University of Illinois, Chief Illiniwek, should be changed because it “does more harm than good” to people of native descent and students and alumni of the university.



## Instructional Module 3: Power of Persuasion

### Instructional Focus

**R 2.8** Evaluate the credibility of an author's argument or defense of a claim by critiquing the relationship between generalizations and evidence, the comprehensiveness of evidence, and the way in which the author's intent affects the structure and tone of the text.

### Instructional Focus

In a well written argument, the author's ideas are structured and sustained in a coherent and logical fashion. The author's position is clear and claims/assertions are supported by rhetorical devices that include appeals to logic through reasoning and appeals to emotion or ethical beliefs. In addition, the author defends his/her position with precise and relevant evidence and addresses the readers' concerns, counter-claims, biases, and expectations.

Identifying the author's position helps the reader to understand the author's thinking. The author's position may include a call to action or a plea for change.

### Instructional Application

The letter that follows was written by the Grand Council Fire of American Indians. Identify the authors' position, purpose, critical claims/assertions, evidence, and use of rhetorical devices as you read.

It would be appropriate for students to evaluate the argument in this letter in groups. The instructional conversations/Accountable Talk will assist with comprehension.

### Accountable Talk

- Engagement with learning through talk
- Accountability to the learning community
- Accountability to knowledge
- Accountability to rigorous thinking

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## **Power of Persuasion**

*LETTER*

### **“Memorial and Recommendations of the Grand Council Fire of American Indians”**

December 1, 1927

To the mayor of Chicago:

You tell all white men “America First.” We believe in that. We are the only ones, truly, that are one hundred percent. We therefore ask you, while you are teaching school children about America First, teach them truth about the First Americans.

We do not know if school histories are pro-British, but we do know that they are unjust to the life of our people-the American Indian. They call all white victories battles and all Indian victories massacres. The battle with Custer has been taught to school children as a fearful massacre on our part. We ask that this, as well as other incidents, be told fairly. If the Custer battle was a massacre, what was Wounded Knee?

History books teach that Indians were murderers-is it murder to fight in self-defense? Indians killed white men because white men took their lands, ruined their hunting grounds, burned their forest, destroy their buffalo. White men penned our people on reservations, then took away the reservations. White men who rise to protect their property are called patriots – Indians who do the same are called murderers.

White men call Indians treacherous – but no mention is made of broken treaties on the part of the white man. White men say that Indians were always fighting. It was only our lack of skill in white man’s warfare that led to our defeat. An Indian mother prayed that her boy be a great medicine man rather than a great warrior. It is true that we had our own small battles, but in the main we were peace loving and home loving.

White men called Indians thieves-and yet we lived in frail skin lodges and needed no locks or iron bars. White men call Indians savages. What is civilization? Its marks are a noble

religion and philosophy, original arts, stirring music, rich story and legend. We had these. Then we were not savages, but a civilized race.

We made blankets that were beautiful, that the white man with all his machinery has never been able to duplicate. We made baskets that were beautiful. We wove in beads and colored quills designs that were not just decorative motifs but were the outward expression of our very thoughts. We made pottery – pottery that was useful and beautiful as well. Why not make school children acquainted with the beautiful handicrafts in which we were skilled? Put in every school Indian blankets, baskets, pottery.

We sang songs that carried in their melodies all the sounds of nature – the running of waters, the sighing of winds, and the calls of the animals. Teach these to your children that they may come to love nature as we love it.

We had our statesmen – and their oratory has never been equaled. Teach the children some of these speeches of our people, remarkable for their brilliant oratory.

We play games – games that brought good health and sound bodies. Why not put these in your schools? We told stories. Why not teach school children more of the wholesome proverbs and legends of our people? Tell them how we loved all that was beautiful. That we killed game only for food, not for fun. Indians think white men who kill for fun are murderers.

Tell your children of the friendly acts of Indians to the white people who first settle here. Tell them of our leaders and heroes and their deeds. Tell them of Indians such as Black Partridge, Shabbona, and others who many times saved the people of Chicago at great danger to themselves. Put in your history books the Indian's part in the World War. Tell how the Indian fought for a country of which he was not a citizen, for a flag to which he had no claim, and for a people that have treated him unjustly.

The Indian has long been hurt by these unfair books. We ask only that our story be told in fairness. We do not ask you to overlook what we did, but we do ask you to understand it. A true program of America First will give a generous place to the culture and history of the American Indians.

We ask this, Chief, to keep sacred the memory of our people.

## Rhetorical Devices \*

To make their arguments effective and memorable, speakers must master rhetoric, the art of speaking or writing well. Over thousands of years, people who speak effectively have developed **rhetorical devices**—certain ways of using language to make their messages attention-getting, persuasive, and memorable. The following chart lists and defines some rhetorical devices you might find when listening to a speech.

Rhetorical Devices
<b>Allusion:</b> referring to literature or to an actual event, person, or place
<b>Diction:</b> choosing words to create a certain <b>tone</b> (the attitude the speaker expresses toward the subject) or <b>mood</b> (the speech's overall impression on the audience)
<b>Metaphor:</b> imaginatively comparing unlike things
<b>Repetition:</b> repeating important words or phrases
<b>Rhetorical question:</b> posing a question without expecting an answer
<b>Parallelism:</b> using the same <b>syntax</b> , or sentence structure, to point out a similarity in ideas

\* Holt Elements of Literature, Fourth Course, online supplemental materials.

In addition, emotional and ethical appeals are commonly used as rhetorical devices in persuasion.

**Emotional appeals** attempt to persuade the audience by engaging the emotions. Emotional appeals speak to feelings, sentiments, and passions. They evoke sympathy, fear, anger, pride, etc.

**Ethical appeals** concentrate on the audience's shared sense of right and wrong. Ethical appeals rely on beliefs that are generally understood as moral, just, principled or decent.

## Using and Evaluating Appeals as Persuasive Rhetorical Devices

**Directions:** There are three types of appeals that are commonly used to persuade an audience. Read the selection(s) and complete the graphic organizer below.

- An **emotional appeal** attempts to persuade the reader or audience by engaging the emotions. Emotional appeals speak to feelings, sentiments, and passions. They evoke sympathy, fear, anger, pride, etc.
- An **ethical appeal** concentrates on the reader or audience's shared sense of right and wrong. Ethical appeals rely on beliefs that are generally understood as moral, just, principled or decent.
- A **logical appeal** engages the mind. Logical appeals depend on that which an identified group would consider valid, rational or commonsensical. Logical appeals are convincing because they are sound, realistic, levelheaded, or equitable.

**Commonly held beliefs** are also a type of persuasive rhetorical device. Commonly held beliefs may be true or inherently fallacious. They are persuasive because an identifiable group of people may believe them strongly.

TYPE OF APPEAL	EXAMPLE	EFFECT

## Evaluating a Persuasive Essay

**Directions:** Read the selection. Analyze the text by responding to the information requested in the boxes below.

**Issue:**

**Position:**

**Reason 1 and evidence:**

**Reason 2 and evidence:**

**Reason 3 and evidence:**

**Possible counter-claims:**

**Response to counter-claims:**

**Is the author's argument credible? Explain.**

# Rhetorical Devices

## The Power of the Spoken Word

*I believe much trouble and blood would be saved if we opened  
Our hearts more. I will tell you in my way how the Indian sees things.  
The white man has more words to tell you how they look to him,  
But it does not require many words to speak the truth.*  
Chief Joseph

*Every part of this earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle,  
every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clearing and humming insect is holy in the memory  
and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees  
carries the memories of the red man.*  
Chief Seattle

### Instructional Focus

**R 2.8** Evaluate the credibility of an author's argument or defense of a claim by critiquing the relationship between generalizations and evidence, the comprehensiveness of evidence, and the way in which the author's intent affects the structure and tone of the text.

**SA 2.5** Deliver persuasive arguments (including evaluation and analysis of problems and solutions and causes and effects):

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- Anticipate and address the listener's concerns and counterarguments.

### Instructional Focus: The Power of the Spoken Word

Speeches provide content models of a variety of structures, rhetorical devices, and language conventions. The content of speeches often strike chords of passion and challenge. The longer excerpt from Chief Joseph's speech in Washington DC centers on the request for equal treatment. At the time Chief Seattle's speech was made, it was commonly believed by whites and as well by many Indians that Native Americans would inevitably become extinct. This sadness permeates his words. The credibility of the speakers is enhanced by their ethnicity.

A critical part of instruction would be to explore what students already know about each speaker and the circumstances that provoked the speech. Scaffolding support follows the speeches along with evaluation tool for oral presentations.

In addition to the reading, analysis, and evaluation of the content of persuasive speeches, students should be encouraged to write and present speeches of their own and evaluate persuasive elements of speeches presented by their peers. These speeches should include elaborations, counter-arguments, and original compositions.

### Sustaining Rigor

What rigorous habits of thinking, inquiry, investigation, problem solving, reading, writing, and speaking do students need to learn?

What teaching and learning activities help students to develop conceptual understanding?

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**Speeches of Chief Joseph (1840-1904)**  
Leader of the Nez Perce

**from A Speech at Lincoln Hall, in Washington DC  
( January 14, 1879 )**



" Too many misinterpretations have been made; too many misunderstandings have come up between the white men and the Indians. If the white man wants to live in peace with the Indian he can live in peace. There need be no trouble. Treat all men alike. Give them the same laws. Give them all an even chance to live and grow. All men were made by the same Great Spirit Chief. They are all brothers. The earth is the mother of all people, and all people should have equal rights upon it. You might as well expect all rivers to run backward as that any man who was born a free man should be contented penned up and denied liberty to go where he pleases. If you tie a horse to a stake, do you expect he will grow fat? If you pen an Indian up on a small spot of earth and compel him to stay there, he will not be contented nor will he grow and prosper. I have asked some of the Great White Chiefs where they get their authority to say to the Indian that he shall stay in one place, while he sees white men going where they please. They cannot tell me."

"I only ask of the Government to be treated as all other men are treated. If I cannot go to my own home, let me have a home in a country where my people will not die so fast."

"When I think of our condition, my heart is heavy. I see men of my own race treated as outlaws and driven from country to country, or shot down like animals. "

"I know that my race must change. We cannot hold our own with the white men as we are. We only ask an even chance to live as other men live. We ask to be recognized as men. We ask that the same law shall work alike on all men. If an Indian breaks the law, punish him by the law. If a white man breaks the law, punish him also."

"Let me be a free man, free to travel, free to stop, free to work, free to trade where I choose, free to choose my own teachers, free to follow the religion of my fathers, free to talk, think and act for myself -- and I will obey every law or submit to the penalty."

"Whenever the white man treats the Indian as they treat each other then we shall have no more wars. We shall be all alike —brothers of one father and mother, with one sky above us and one country around us and one government for all. Then the Great Spirit Chief who rules above will smile upon this land and send rain to wash out the bloody spots made by brothers' hands upon the face of the earth. For this time the Indian race is waiting and praying. I hope no more groans of wounded men and women will ever go to the ear of the Great Spirit Chief above, and that all people may be one people."

**Speech in surrendering to General Nelson Appleton Miles after long evading a pursuit nearly to the border of Canada. (October 5, 1877)**

"Tell General Howard I know his heart. What he told me before, I have it in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our Chiefs are killed; Looking Glass is dead, Ta Hool Hool Shute is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes or no. He who led on the young men is dead. It is cold, and we have no blankets; the little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are - perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children, and see how many of them I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my Chiefs! I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the Sun now stands, I will fight no more forever."

**Arguing against the right of the US Government to force his people to leave their lands (1876)**

"In the treaty councils the commissioners have claimed that our country had been sold to the Government. Suppose a white man should come to me and say, 'Joseph, I like your horses, and I want to buy them.' I say to him, 'No, my horses suit me, I will not sell them.' Then he goes to my neighbor, and says to him: 'Joseph has some good horses. I want to buy them, but he refuses to sell.' My neighbor answers, 'Pay me the money, and I will sell you Joseph's horses.' The white man returns to me and says, 'Joseph, I have bought your horses, and you must let me have them.' If we sold our lands to the Government, this is the way they were bought."

From MediaWiki, the free encyclopedia.

## Chief Seattle's Speech

Yonder sky that has wept tears of compassion upon my people for centuries untold, and which to us appears changeless and eternal, may change. Today is fair. Tomorrow it may be overcast with clouds.



My words are like the stars that never change. Whatever Seattle says, the great chief at Washington can rely upon with as much certainty as he can upon the return of the sun or the seasons.

The white chief says that Big Chief at Washington sends us greetings of friendship and goodwill. This is kind of him for we know he has little need of our friendship in return.

His people are many. They are like the grass that covers vast prairies. My people are few. They resemble the scattering trees of a storm-swept plain. The great, and I presume – good, White Chief sends us word that he wishes to buy our land but is willing to allow us enough to live comfortably. This indeed appears just, even generous, for the Red Man no longer has rights that he need respect, and the offer may be wise, also, as we are no longer in need of an extensive country.

There was a time when our people covered the land as the waves of a wind-ruffled sea cover its shell-paved floor, but that time long since passed away with the greatness of tribes that are now but a mournful memory. I will not dwell on, nor mourn over, our untimely decay, nor reproach my paleface brothers with hastening it, as we too may have been somewhat to blame.

Youth is impulsive. When our young men grow angry at some real or imaginary wrong, and disfigure their faces with black paint, it denotes that their hearts are black, and that they are often cruel and relentless, and our old men and old women are unable to restrain them. Thus it has ever been. Thus it was when the white man began to push our forefathers ever westward. But let us hope that the hostilities between us may never return. We would have everything to lose and nothing to gain. Revenge by young men is considered gain, even at the cost of their own lives, but old men who stay at home in times of war, and mothers who have sons to lose, know better.

Our good father in Washington—for I presume he is now our father as well as yours, since King George has moved his boundaries further north—our great and good father, I say, sends us word that if we do as he desires he will protect us. His brave warriors will be to us a bristling wall of strength, and his wonderful ships of war will fill our harbors, so that our ancient enemies far to the northward – the Haidas and Tsimshians, will cease to frighten our women, children, and old men. He in reality he will be our father and we his children.

But can that ever be? Your God is not our God! Your God loves your people and hates mine. He folds his strong protecting arms lovingly about the paleface and leads him by the hand as a father leads an infant son. But, He has forsaken His Red children, if they really are His. Our God, the Great Spirit, seems also to have forsaken us. Your God makes your people wax stronger every day. Soon they will fill all the land.

Our people are ebbing away like a rapidly receding tide that will never return. The white man's God cannot love our people or He would protect them. They seem to be orphans who can look nowhere for help. How then can we be brothers? How can your God become our God and renew our prosperity and awaken in us dreams of returning greatness? If we have a common Heavenly Father He must be partial, for He came to His paleface children.

We never saw Him. He gave you laws but had no word for His red children whose teeming multitudes once filled this vast continent as stars fill the firmament. No; we are two distinct races with separate origins and separate destinies. There is little in common between us.

To us the ashes of our ancestors are sacred and their resting place is hallowed ground. You wander far from the graves of your ancestors and seemingly without regret. Your religion was written upon tablets of stone by the iron finger of your God so that you could not forget.

The Red Man could never comprehend or remember it. Our religion is the traditions of our ancestors – the dreams of our old men, given them in solemn hours of the night by the Great Spirit; and the visions of our sachems, and is written in the hearts of our people.

Your dead cease to love you and the land of their nativity as soon as they pass the portals of the tomb and wander away beyond the stars. They are soon forgotten and never return.

Our dead never forget this beautiful world that gave them being. They still love its verdant valleys, its murmuring rivers, its magnificent mountains, sequestered vales and verdant lined lakes and bays, and ever yearn in tender fond affection over the lonely hearted living, and often return from the happy hunting ground to visit, guide, console, and comfort them.

Day and night cannot dwell together. The Red Man has ever fled the approach of the White Man, as the morning mist flees before the morning sun. However, your proposition seems fair and I think that my people will accept it and will retire to the reservation you offer them. Then we will dwell apart in peace, for the words of the Great White Chief seem to be the words of nature speaking to my people out of dense darkness.

It matters little where we pass the remnant of our days. They will not be many. The Indian's night promises to be dark. Not a single star of hope hovers above his horizon. Sad-voiced winds moan in the distance. Grim fate seems to be on the Red Man's trail, and wherever he

will hear the approaching footsteps of his fell destroyer and prepare stolidly to meet his doom, as does the wounded doe that hears the approaching footsteps of the hunter.

A few more moons, a few more winters, and not one of the descendants of the mighty hosts that once moved over this broad land or lived in happy homes, protected by the Great Spirit, will remain to mourn over the graves of a people once more powerful and hopeful than yours.

But why should I mourn at the untimely fate of my people? Tribe follows tribe, and nation follows nation, like the waves of the sea. It is the order of nature, and regret is useless. Your time of decay may be distant, but it will surely come, for even the White Man whose God walked and talked with him as friend to friend, cannot be exempt from the common destiny. We may be brothers after all. We will see.

We will ponder your proposition and when we decide we will let you know. But should we accept it, I here and now make this condition that we will not be denied the privilege without molestation of visiting at any time the tombs of our ancestors, friends, and children. Every part of this soil is sacred in the estimation of my people. Every hillside, every valley, every plain and grove, has been hallowed by some sad or happy event in days long vanished.

Even the rocks, which seem to be dumb and dead as they swelter in the sun along the silent shore, thrill with memories of stirring events connected with the lives of my people, and the very dust upon which you now stand responds more lovingly to their footsteps than yours, because it is rich with the blood of our ancestors, and our bare feet are conscious of the sympathetic touch. Our departed braves, fond mothers, glad, happy hearted maidens, and even the little children who lived here and rejoiced here for a brief season, will love these somber solitudes and at eventide they greet shadowy returning spirits.

And when the last Red Man shall have perished, and the memory of my tribe shall have become a myth among the White Men, these shores will swarm with the invisible dead of my tribe, and when your children's children think themselves alone in the field, the store, the shop, upon the highway, or in the silence of the pathless woods, they will not be alone. In all the earth there is no place dedicated to solitude. At night when the streets of your cities and villages are silent and you think them deserted, they will throng with the returning hosts that once filled them and still love this beautiful land. The White Man will never be alone.

Let him be just and deal kindly with my people, for the dead are not powerless. Dead, did I say? - There is no death, only a change of worlds.

Source: "Four Wagons West," by Roberta Frye Watt, Binsford & Mort, Portland Ore., 1934. Originally published in the Seattle Sunday Star, Oct. 29 1887. The text was produced by one "Dr." Smith, an early settler in Seattle, who took notes as Seattle spoke in the Suquamish dialect of central Puget Sound Salish (Lushootseed).

# Power of the Spoken Word

## Instructional Focus

**SA 2.5 Deliver persuasive arguments (including evaluation and analysis of problems and solutions and causes and effects):**

- a. Structure ideas and arguments in a coherent, logical fashion.
- b. Use rhetorical devices to support assertions (e.g., by appeal to logic through reasoning; by appeal to emotion or ethical belief; by use of personal anecdote, case study, or analogy).
- c. Clarify and defend positions with precise and relevant evidence, including facts, expert opinions, quotations, expressions of commonly accepted beliefs, and logical reasoning.
- d. Anticipate and address the listener's concerns and counterarguments.

## Instructional Focus

Debates are an effective way to involve students in persuasive arguments in a sustained fashion. Debates require students to structure ideas and arguments in a coherent and logical manner, to use rhetorical devices to support assertions, to clarify and defend positions with precise and relevant evidence, and to anticipate and address the listener's concerns and counter arguments. The Commission on Presidential Debates (CPD) compiled the following guidelines for sponsoring debates of any kind, including those in political races, issue forums, and student debates.

This guide was prepared to answer the questions most commonly asked by the educational, civic and media organizations that host debates. It will introduce you to the steps necessary to organize such an event and serve as a checklist for planning. Remember there's no single right way to proceed; this guide will simply outline some options.

## Academic Rigor in a Thinking Curriculum

- Commitment to a Knowledge Core
- High thinking demand
- Active use of knowledge

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## Format

Different formats have been used in debates over the years. These styles include the town hall meeting (when the audience asks the questions), the panel approach (when the debate participants answer questions from a number of people), and the single moderator (when one person asks questions). A single moderator tends to focus the audience's attention more on the debaters and less on panel participants. Regardless of which format you select, you will have to consider the following issues.

## Selection of Questioners

Pick a person/persons who are familiar with the issues being debated. Above all, choose a moderator or panelists whom you and the debate participants trust to be professional and fair.

If you decide to organize the debate as a town meeting, select an unbiased audience. Consider asking a neutral, independent group or companion class to serve as members of the audience.

### **Debate Topics**

What will the debate be about? It can be wide-ranging or confined to just a few issues. If you are sponsoring a series of debates, you might consider organizing each debate around a particular theme or topic.

### **Debate Length**

How long should the debate be? The answer to this question will depend on a variety of factors, including the number of participants, and how many debates there will be.

### **Opening and Closing Statements**

Will the debaters have opening and closing statements? Prepared statements reduce the amount of time for questions, so consider limiting them to two or three minutes.

### **Questions and Answers**

Consider setting time limits for both questions and answers. Presidential debates may provide some examples. In the 1996, presidential debates questions were limited to 20 seconds in length. Citizen questioners in the 1992 and 1996 town hall debates were kept short and limited to one topic. Candidates in the presidential debates were given two minutes for answers and one minute for rebuttals. Remember that the length of the questions and answers will determine how many topics can be addressed during the debate.

### **Timing the Debate**

Properly timing the opening/closing statements, answers, and rebuttals is important. It is not a job to give to the moderator, who will be occupied with many other responsibilities. Select a responsible person to keep time and establish an easy system to let the moderator and the participants know when their time is up. Remember that mistakes in timing can lead to claims of unfairness.

### **Order of Speakers**

Who speaks first and who finishes up? Sporting events offer a good way to decide - flip a coin. If you have more than two participants, draw straws or use another easy selection process.

\* Adapted from the Commission on Presidential Debates, <http://www.debates.org/pages/education.html>

### **Instructional Application**

#### ***Taking a Position***

There are many issues that are appropriate for high school students to debate; current issues that extend the arguments presented in the literature on Native Americans might include:

***Socio-economic Context*** - Schools, organizations, and commercial industries have been requested to change their icons or mascots because they are considered offensive to Native Americans.

#### **Intervention and Extension**

**Additional Resources:** The On-Line *Elements of Literature* provides audio clips of famous speeches and a link to "Great Speeches in History," a collection of speeches delivered by past presidents.

Related text excerpt:

### **CHIEF ILLINIWEK: DIGNIFIED OR DAMAGING?**

**"The controversy at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign surrounding its use of Chief Illiniwek as a campus symbol continues to rage. At a recent meeting of the General University Policy Committee of the university's Senate Council (January 25, 1995), key representatives of pro-Chief constituencies recommended that the university withstand the protests of Chief detractors and continue its use of the embattled symbol. The Committee listened to Lou Liay and Don Dodds of the Alumni Association present information suggesting that the majority of university alumni support the continued use of the Chief. They mentioned that some alumni have threatened to halt their contributions to the university if the Chief is retired. In short, they clearly conveyed to the committee the heartfelt respect and pride which the Chief symbolically embodies for the majority of university alumni. As a result, any move to discard the Illiniwek tradition would be viewed with disfavor by this constituency..."**

**"In the ongoing Chief debates at the university, it is not uncommon to hear heartfelt cries that "the Chief is dignified and honoring!" or, alternatively, that "the Chief is racist and damaging!" We must not forget, however, that these statements cannot meaningfully communicate information without first specifying to whom the Chief is honoring or damaging and for whom the Chief is racist or dignified. By his very symbolic nature, the Chief means different things to different people as well as different things to different groups of people. Inattention to these details has resulted in widespread misunderstanding and a genuine lack of communication. Let me begin by stating that I am willing to concede that Chief supporters, by and large, assign meanings to the Chief symbol which are generally positive and, furthermore, that many sincerely intend to honor "the Native American Culture" by use of the Chief. In this regard, I have absolutely no interest in condemning all Chief supporters as dyed- in-the-wool racists. Despite these concessions, however, I am also convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Chief does more harm than good to my own interests as a native person. Furthermore, I will argue that the Chief does more harm than good to the interests of other Indian persons who have attended this university and to native people more broadly. It is because of this conviction that I actively pursue the retirement of Chief Illiniwek..."**

**Joseph P. Gone (Gros Ventre) February 15, 1995  
<http://www.inwhosehonor.com/Gone.HTML>**

### Participating in a Debate \*

"That's debatable" is an expression people often use to cast doubt on something that has just been said. If a statement is debatable, good arguments can be made both for and against it. While a persuasive essay or speech presents only one side of an issue, a **debate** involves two teams on opposite sides of an issue who publicly compete for the hearts and minds of an audience.

### Prepare for a Debate

**A Winning Proposition** If you are asked to participate in a debate, you must first know what proposition you will be debating. A **proposition** focuses on one narrow, controversial issue. The proposition suggests a change in the **status quo**—the current state of things—and is worded as a **resolution**. An example of a proposition is "Resolved: That Chavez High School should build a parking lot west of the main soccer fields." Most often the person in charge of the debate assigns the proposition that the teams will debate.

Participants in a debate are usually also assigned a side of the proposition—pro (for) or con (against). If you are participating in a debate, your challenge is to present a good argument, based on solid reasoning, for your side of the issue—regardless of your personal feelings on the issue.

**Who's Who?** A traditional debate requires two teams of two people each, plus a chairperson in charge of running the debate.

**Affirmative Team** The **affirmative team** argues that the proposition should be accepted. Because the affirmative team argues for a change in the status quo, it has the **burden of proof**—an obligation to prove that change must be made.

**Negative Team** The **negative team** argues that the proposition should be rejected and that the status quo should remain unchanged.

**Chairperson** A **chairperson** rules over a debate, keeping the debate organized, courteous, and fair. A debater may appeal to the chairperson if he or she believes that the other team has broken any rules.

**Research the Proposition** To debate effectively, you must prepare by thoroughly researching the proposition. First, identify the differences between your position and the

\* Holt *Elements of Literature*, Fourth Edition, online supplemental materials

other team's position. These differences often revolve around the following questions.

- Is there a significant problem?
- What is causing the problem?
- Would this proposition solve the problem?
- What would the proposition cost (in time, money, or other resources)?

Next, develop **specific reasons**, which may include rhetorical devices, that will show people why they should support your side of the proposition. In turn, you must also find **proof**—evidence to support each reason. Three types of evidence commonly used in debates are defined below.

**Facts and Statistics** **Facts** are statements that can be proven true. **Statistics** are information based on numbers. For example, the following statistic might support an argument proposing a new school parking lot: "Our parking lot has 150 spaces, yet 297 teachers, staff, and students drive to school."

**Specific Instances** **Specific Instances** are examples that illustrate a point, such as, "Parents who come to school during school hours have said that they had to park their cars blocks away on residential streets."

**Testimony** **Testimony** includes comments or opinions from people who have studied or experienced the problem. Here is an example of supporting testimony: "According to Principal Cho, 'School parking is a serious problem. Students with after-school jobs need to drive rather than take the bus. We don't have enough space for all of them.'"

Be sure that all evidence—facts, statistics, specific instances, and testimony—that supports your reasons meets the tests in the chart below.

Tests For Evidence	
Evidence should have...	That means...
<b>credibility</b>	evidence should come from a source recognized as an authority on the subject. The source should be objective rather than biased toward one side of the issue.
<b>validity</b>	evidence should clearly support the position it is being used to support. Valid evidence should not be interpreted to support the opposite side of the issue.
<b>relevance</b>	evidence should have a close, logical relationship to the reason it supports. Relevant information is also recent enough to directly relate to the issue being addressed

## Organize Your Debate Information

To Each Its Own Organize the reasons and evidence you find into three categories.

- **Constructive arguments**—support for your side
- **Refutations**—attacks on the other side's position
- **Rebuttals**—material that answers challenges to your position

**Constructive Speeches** A traditional debate is divided into two parts: **constructive speeches** and **rebuttal speeches** (which include both rebuttals and refutations).

First, teams make **constructive speeches**, which build their arguments for or against the proposition.

- If you are presenting a constructive speech for the **affirmative** (pro) side of an issue, you should provide two to four reasons for your position, each reason backed with strong evidence.
- To present a constructive speech for the **negative** (con) side of an issue, plan to defend the status quo. In other words, your speech should make clear either that no problem exists or that any existing problem can be corrected through existing solutions. Again, you will use reasons and evidence to build your position.

**Rebuttal Speeches** After the constructive speeches, both teams make **rebuttal speeches**. In spite of their name, rebuttal speeches should include both rebuttals and refutations. In a **rebuttal** you rebuild your own arguments that the other team has damaged, while in a **refutation** you attempt to disprove your opponents' constructive arguments. Effective refutations focus on these elements:

- **Quantity**—Does the other team provide enough evidence?
- **Quality**—Is the other team's evidence credible, valid, and relevant?
- **Reasoning**—Has the other team drawn logical conclusions based on the evidence?

Making an effective rebuttal speech depends on your ability to listen to the opposing team's arguments and respond with convincing arguments and evidence of your own.

## Conduct the Debate

**Present Yourself** As a debater, you must follow proper **debate etiquette**. No matter what your opponent may say, you should remain respectful and courteous, avoiding sarcasm and personal attacks. Be polite. It is traditional to refer to other debate participants with terms such as "the first affirmative speaker" or "my worthy opponent."

**Present Your Ideas** Your reasons and evidence will have the greatest impact if you are well prepared. As you speak, maintain eye contact with your audience and speak slowly, clearly, and loudly enough that everyone can understand you. Use your voice and facial expressions to emphasize important points.

**Speaking in Turn** A traditional debate follows this schedule. Each team member delivers one constructive and one rebuttal speech.

Traditional Debate Schedule		
First Part: Constructive Speeches		Second Part: Rebuttal Speeches
(10 minutes each)	I n t e r m i s s i o n	(5 minutes each)
1st Affirmative Team Speaker		1st Negative Team Speaker
1st Negative Team Speaker		1st Affirmative Team Speaker
2nd Affirmative Team Speaker		2nd Negative Team Speaker
2nd Negative Team Speaker		2nd Affirmative Team Speaker

**And the Winner Is...** Judges usually determine the winner of a debate. Occasionally, an audience may vote to determine the winning team. To make your own judgment about which team won a debate, answer the questions in the following chart. You can use the chart to evaluate both the affirmative and negative teams.

<b>Questions for Judging a Debate</b>	
<b>Content</b>	<b>Delivery</b>
1. What arguments did the team provide to prove or disprove that a significant problem exists? Were these arguments effective? Explain why or why not.	1. How confident and well prepared were the speakers? How could they improve their delivery?
2. Did the team convince you that the proposition is or is not the best solution to solving the problem (if any exists)? Explain.	2. How well did each speaker maintain eye contact? How effective were the rate and volume at which each spoke?
3. What reasons and evidence did the team provide to support the case? How credible, valid, and relevant was the evidence?	3. Describe any incidents in which the speakers did not observe proper debate etiquette.
4. How did the team refute and rebut arguments made by the opposing team? Were the rebuttal speeches effective? Explain why or why not.	