

17. DICTIONARY CHALLENGE

GOAL:

To acquaint students with the use of dictionaries as a means of clarifying the debate.

METHOD:

- If you have access to several dictionaries, pick one resolution and challenge the students to find as many different definitions as possible.
 - Have students present their definitions to the class and give awards for several categories: most reasonable, most unexpected but still reasonable, most distorted, most useless, and so on.
 - The instructor may also want to stage a mini-debate on definitions by having two students argue over which definition is more reasonable.
 - The goal in such a debate would be to emphasize that students should give brief, clear reasons why their definition would lead to a better debate, and to emphasize that such a definitional dispute would never characterize an entire debate, but only a moment in a debate.
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18. GUIDED RESEARCH

GOAL:

To teach students to read with purpose when doing research.

METHOD:

- Provide students with a short article (the shorter the better) on a topic which they will be debating.
- Move through the article, sentence by sentence, either individually or as a class, and discuss whether a particular idea, fact, or quotation would be useful for a debate.
- It is important for students to identify the specific claim that research materials would support, and to summarize arguments in one sentence (sometimes called a "tag").