

Civil War Debates

Imagine that you are speaking to a crowd of people who have gathered to consider how to vote or what to think about an issue that you know about, and you need to persuade your listeners to accept your point of view.

Topic options (for or against):

1. The Compromise of 1850 was a good compromise.
2. The Fugitive Slave Act was a good law.
3. The Kansas Nebraska Act is a good law.
4. The Dred Scott Decision was a good decision.
5. John Brown was an outlaw and a villain.
6. Secession is the right of every Southerner.

You may take the position as stated above. Or you may want to take the opposing position.

Good persuasive speaking includes the following elements.

1. It should open with an engaging opening that shows an understanding of the opposition point of view and a grabber of some kind that draws the audience in. The introduction should include your basic, simply-put thesis statement, the answer to the question of your prompt.
2. It should have a clear, full explanation of the situation. Show that you know what you are talking about, and explain the issues to show that your position is the one that is morally right, just, fair, or best for all parties concerned.
3. You should have references to people or documents that are respected as authoritative. Some examples are the founders (Jefferson, Paine, Henry) or the legal or historical documents (Declaration of Independence, Constitution, The Bible).
4. You should have answers to the objections of your opponent. Show that you understand their opinion and that they are mistaken. Describe their position. Present evidence to suggest that their position is in the wrong.
5. Use creative language, stories, metaphors, analogies or comparisons. Remember that persuasive speaking is a combination of reasons that capture the mind, and emotional appeals that appeal to the heart.
6. Finish with a powerful, clear conclusion. Make your point strong and clear at the end. You may want to summarize and/or review your main points. State your most convincing point at the end. You may want to use a comparison or metaphor to close and seal your case.

Students may want to work with a partner. If a pair of students writes two papers together, opposing one another (taking opposite sides on the issue), there may be extra credit involved.

Final draft quality papers must be turned in by the due date.

Papers will be presented as oral presentations. See the next page for oral presentation requirements.

Name and Topic: _____

Introduction

- Engage the audience
- Provide the facts, background information.
- Thesis: what is your position on the matter? What is your main point?

Reason #1 (body paragraph #1)

- Topic sentence
- Anecdotes
- Examples
- References to historical documents
- Logic and reason

Reason #2 (body paragraph #2)

- Topic sentence
- Anecdotes
- Examples
- References to historical documents
- Logic and reason

Reason #3 (body paragraph #3)

- Topic sentence
- Anecdotes
- Examples
- References to historical documents
- Logic and reason

Conclusion

- Restate your thesis
- Summarize your main points
- Call to action

Is **the morality of slavery** woven into the speech in a way that relates clearly to the speech topic?

Oral speaking skills

- Speak loudly, clearly, smoothly
- Show good pace, tone, pronunciation
- Show good organization: it is easy to follow because of good, clear transitions
- Show good development: each idea is developed with examples or anecdotes or clear, full reasoning
- Respectfully address your listeners' objections
- Be engaging and energetic, not dull and lifeless
- Provide accurate information