# Debate Rubric

| Criteria | Mastery | Above Standard | Standard | Approaches Standard | Below Standard |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Opening and closing statements | • extremely thorough, well organized presentation of arguments and evidence<br>• opening statement engages the interest of audience; closing statement leaves no unanswered issues and resonates with the audience | • well organized and complete presentation of arguments and evidence<br>• opening statement successfully frames the issues; closing statement summarizes many arguments made in the debate | • organized and generally complete presentation of arguments and evidence<br>• opening statement outlines or lists arguments and evidence but does not generate interest; closing statement does not reflect remarks made during debate | • somewhat organized presentation of arguments and evidence<br>• opening statement minimally outlines arguments; closing argument briefly restates the ideas offered in the opening statement | • arguments are unorganized, incomplete, or completely lacking in evidence<br>• opening statement and closing statements do little more than state the position of the team |
| Rebuttals | • responds to issues raised by opponents with concise, accurate, logical answers<br>• effectively challenges the arguments made by opponents with argument and evidence | • responds to issues raised by opponents with accurate and generally concise answers<br>• challenges the arguments made by opponents; challenges are generally effective | • responds to most of the issues raised by opponents with generally accurate answers<br>• offers arguments, but no evidence, to counter the arguments made by opponents | • seems to be caught off-guard by opponents; offers tentative, somewhat accurate, but possibly vague or illogical responses<br>• attempts to challenge arguments of opponents | • is unable to respond to issues raised by opponents in a meaningful or accurate way |
| Effective use of historical evidence/ content knowledge | • demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the issues, events, and facts relevant to the topic<br>• demonstrates thorough and accurate understanding of details as well as the ability to make original connections and interpretations | • demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the issues, events, and facts relevant to the topic<br>• demonstrates thorough and accurate understanding of details as well as the ability to make original connections and interpretations | • demonstrates a basic and accurate understanding of the issues, events, and facts relevant to the topic<br>• demonstrates the ability to make basic connections between facts and concepts | • demonstrates a generally accurate understanding of relevant issues, events, and facts, but may exhibit minor confusion or misunderstandings<br>• seems to understand general ideas, but does not support ideas with relevant facts; OR, seems to understand facts but is unable to connect them into coherent arguments | • demonstrates an inadequate understanding of the history/content relevant to the topic<br>• supports statements with vague or irrelevant information, or no information at all |
| Use of persuasive appeals | • makes deliberate and effective use of logical, emotional, and ethical appeals in order to persuade | • uses logical, emotional, and ethical appeals to enhance effectiveness of argument | • uses some appeals to make argument more persuasive, but may not include a mix of logical, emotional, and ethical appeals | • makes minimal use of persuasive appeals | • does not use persuasive rhetoric |
| Language use | • uses language that is stylistically sophisticated and appropriate<br>• uses literary devices to enhance the argument | • uses language that is appropriate<br>• uses literary devices to add interest | • uses language that is appropriate<br>• attempts to use literary devices to add interest | • generally uses language that is appropriate<br>• uses basic but clear language | • uses colloquial, overly simplistic language<br>• uses language and syntax that is unclear |
| Performance | • exhibits confidence, energy, and passion in the course of the debate<br>• maintains respectful tone<br>• accesses preparation materials with ease | • exhibits confidence and energy in the course of the debate<br>• maintains respectful tone<br>• uses preparation materials effectively | • appears nervous, yet somewhat confident<br>• maintains respectful tone<br>• use of preparation materials does not distract | • lacks confidence<br>• maintains respectful tone<br>• use of preparation materials distracts from quality of performance | • demonstrates little or no preparation<br>• fails to maintain respectful tone |