

High School Debate Topics

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High School Debate Topics

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Teacher and Mentor

Whether it's joining your high school debate team or talking about [topical discussions](#) in class, debating is a wonderful way to shore up your speaking skills and to build confidence in yourself. Debating helps you learn about yourself, think on your feet and learn how to take a stand on controversial issues. If you have to prepare for a high school debate or discussion, consider some of these issues and questions to help you form a

solid argument.

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Social Debate Topics

The Welfare System

The welfare system in the United States is surrounded with controversy. Examples of the controversy include whether there should be time limits on welfare benefits and if welfare recipients should be required to take drug tests.

Abortion

Should abortion be legal? Is late-term abortion ever an acceptable choice? These questions form the bulk of the debate over abortion. When forming an argument based on these questions, you must consider abortion in cases of rape and whether teenagers should be able to get an abortion without their parents being notified.

Legalization of Gay Marriage

While some states have legalized gay marriage, the majority of states are still debating the issue. At the center of the issue are what is the true definition of marriage and whether gay couples should be given the same rights and benefits as married heterosexual couples.

Traditional Families vs. Contemporary Families

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), over 50 percent of marriages end in divorce. As couples split up, families change. In addition to divorced families, couples with children choose not to marry, gay couples have children and grandparents raise their grandchildren. Is the traditional family still

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Political Debate Topics

Gun Control

The debate over gun control centers around whether citizens should be able to own and carry guns. An argument should consider the risks that come with owning a gun and the possibility of guns falling into the wrong hands or being used to harm someone in cases other than self-defense.

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Waterboarding and Other Forms of Torture

To help gain information from terrorists, the U.S. government uses various forms of torture, including waterboarding. Are these methods of gaining information humane? Is waterboarding a form of cruel and unusual punishment?

Offshore Drilling

As gas prices rise, some people think that tapping into America's oil reserves will help lower gas prices and reduce how much the United States relies on countries such as Iran for oil. Those against offshore drilling cite the cost, negative environmental impact and dangers it poses.

Illegal Immigration

The debate about illegal immigration focuses on what measures the United States should take to prevent illegal immigrants from entering the country and what should happen to them if they are found. Should the United States implement more policies to prevent and punish illegal immigrants or should the immigration policies be more lenient?

The Death Penalty

Is the death penalty a form of cruel and unusual punishment? Are certain groups of people sentenced to the death penalty more than others? These questions are two of the biggest components of the capital punishment debate.

Science Debate Topics

Stem Cell Research

Stem cell research can be used to help discover cures for different illnesses and cancers and may also be used to replace cells in cases of brain and spinal cord injuries. While stem cells can come from adult cells and cord cells, embryonic cells are at the center of controversy. Extracting cells from an embryo kills that embryo. The questions that must be answered when debating this topic are: Is an embryo a

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Human Cloning

Scientists have cloned sheep, mice, dogs and other life forms, but they have yet to clone humans. Should humans be cloned? Cloning humans could help infertile couples have a child or create a child identical to a parent, give a human replacement body parts or be used to test new drugs and medical procedures.

Smoking Cigarettes

Many cities have banned smoking in public places. Should smoking cigarettes be banned in public places? Is second-hand smoke as big of a risk as we have been led to believe? These questions, along with health problems that come as a result of smoking, should be considered in a debate.

Climate Change

Previously known as global warming, proponents of the climate change debate argue that humans have a major impact on the environment and climate. Those who speak against climate change argue that the impact of humans is negligible and climate changes are part of a natural geological cycle.

Organic Foods

Organic foods are created without the use of chemicals or synthetic ingredients. What, if any, are the health and environmental benefits that come from eating organic foods? Do the nutrition and safety benefits outweigh the extra cost?

Legalizing Marijuana

States such as California have legalized the use of marijuana for medical reasons. Should all states follow suit? The debate focuses on whether marijuana should be legal in medical cases or legal in all cases and what risks and benefits come from legalizing the drug.

Educational Debate Topics

School Internet Controls

Schools typically block inappropriate websites and websites that are not educational. Should schools limit what students are allowed to access? Is blocking content effective or will students just try to find a way to get around it and see what they are missing?

School Uniforms

Proponents of school uniforms argue that they improve discipline and academic performance. Those against the issue say that uniforms violate a student's right to freedom of expression and harm students by not allowing them to show their individuality.

Cell Phone Use in School

Schools often ban cell phones to keep students focused in class. Should cell phones be banned in schools? The debate focuses on whether students should be allowed to have cell phones for cases of an emergency or if allowing cell phones can lead to cases of cheating, harassment and general disruptions.

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promoted to the next grade level and whether schools are doing a good job of teaching students. Can one test or series of standardized tests really determine how smart a student is or how well a school is doing?

Year-Round School

The debate over year-round school focuses on whether students who attend a year-round school retain more information and perform better academically than students who attend a traditional school.

Entertainment Debate Topics

The Influence of Television and Music

Whenever a teen gets pregnant, does drugs, uses foul language or commits a crime, certain TV shows and popular songs usually get the blame. Do television and music really have that great of an influence on teens?

Violent Video Games

The debate over violent video games centers around whether kids and teens who regularly play violent video games are more prone to violence.

Beauty Pageants

Proponents of beauty pageants argue that they improve a girl's self-esteem and celebrate more than just beauty. Those against beauty pageants feel they promote an unhealthy body image and value looks over anything else.

Cell Phone Use While Driving

Many states have already banned texting while driving and some also have laws that do not allow drivers to talk on cell phones while driving without the use of a hands-free device. A debate over cell phone use should discuss what dangers come from using cell phones while driving and in what cases drivers may need to have access to cell phones.

Professional Athletes and A-list Celebrities Pay

Professional athletes and a-list celebrities get paid millions of dollars. Do they deserve to get paid as much as they do? Some argue that they do not do enough to earn that money or that it could be put to much better use. Others think they should be rewarded for their talent.

Other Resources for Debate Topics

If you still have trouble coming up with a topic for a debate, multiple organizations maintain extensive lists of debate topics, including those used in national competitions. These resources will also help you locate facts and arguments to help you prepare for your next debate.

- ProCon.org features a discussion of over 40 controversial topics.
- Juggle.com hosts regular online debates on popular issues. Browse the debates to see what others think or contribute your own opinions.

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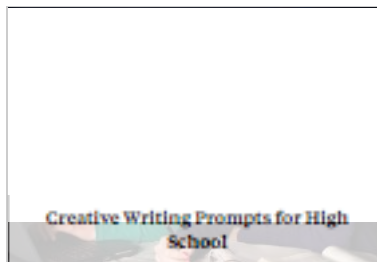
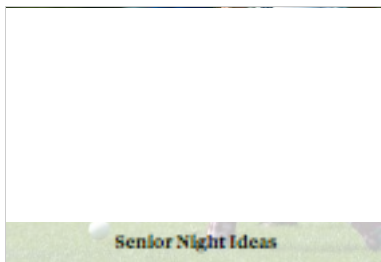
- [All About Popular Issues](#) offers overviews of current controversial issues that could be used as debate topics.
- The [National Forensic League](#) maintains a list of past policy debate topics dating as far back as 1939.
- The [International Debate Education Association](#) has incredibly well-organized offering of hundreds of debate topics ranging, including issues in current events.

Choosing a Debate Topic

Whatever topic you choose to debate, make sure it is something you can form an argument for or against. The more passionate you are about a topic, the better. If you do not care about the welfare system or how much athletes make, it will be much harder to argue for or against it.

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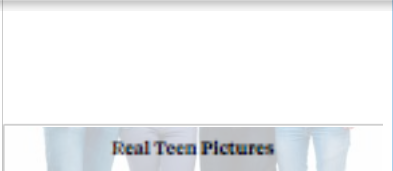


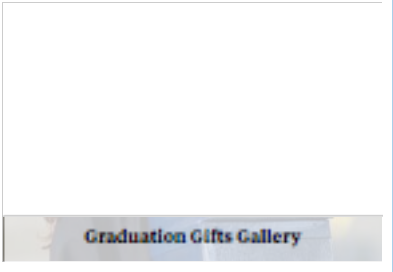
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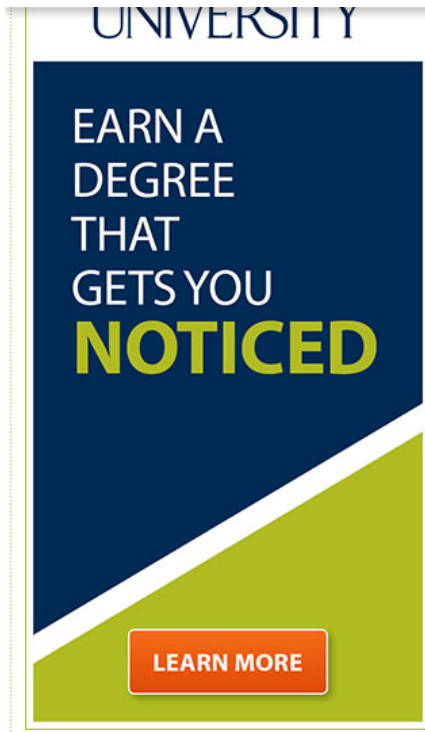
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