**Project-Based Unit Planning Template**

“Who is your opponent?”

**“He doesn’t exist.”**

“Why doesn’t he exist?”

**“Because he is a mere dissenting voice to the truth that I speak.”**

* -*The Great Debaters*

Project Name: **Academic Debate**

Project Developer(s): **Nikki Carson**

Number of Sessions: **16 (one hour)**

Project/Students’ Purpose: **Students will communicate and refute arguments effectively; analyze controversial issues; evaluate evidence; and recognize opportunities for leadership.**

Audience: **Other learners, stakeholders, and educators**

Final Product: **A civic engagement field trip**

Key Standards:

**CCRS –**

**Anchor 1 RI/RL 7.1-10.1** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis.

**Anchor 6 RI 5.6-10.6** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content/style of a text.

**Anchor 7 RI 3.7-10.7** Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats.

**Anchor 8 RI 5.8-10.8** Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

**Anchor 1 W 5.1-10.1** Write arguments to support claims, using valid reasoning and sufficient evidence.

**Anchor 6 W 4.6-10.6** Use technology including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

**Anchor 7 W 5.7-12.7** Conduct research projects based on focused questions.

**Anchor 8 W 5.8-10.8** Gather relevant info from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate info while avoiding plagiarism.

**Anchor 1 SL 5.1-10.1** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

**Anchor 3 SL 8.3-12.3** Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning and use of evidence and rhetoric.

**Anchor 4 SL 5.4-10.4** Present info, findings and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning.

**Anchor 3 L 4.3-7.3** Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts. E.g. Choose language that expresses ideas concisely, eliminating wordiness.  
**TIF –**   
**SM. 3a, d, e, f:** Manage time effectively to complete tasks.

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| **Project Launch** | **Whole-Class Lesson** | **Small-Group, Partner, and Individual Work** | **Whole-Class Wrap-Up** | **Standards Addressed** |
| Session 1 | Discuss/brainstorm “Conversation Strategies” for different contexts. Define some key vocabulary for this project: **debate, controversial, pro/con, status quo, significant, and resolved** | Hold small group discussions of how in-class debates can improve our skills. Ask Ss to choose a note-taker, a time-keeper, a reporter, and a discussion manager. The note-taker can create a Venn diagram or T-chart on a piece of paper, as modeled by the instructor. Groups should brainstorm how debating can improve learners academically and as employees. | Group reporters share out what was discussed. The teacher facilitates whole class wrap-up at the board using a Venn diagram, so learners can see that some skills overlap. | Anchor 1 SL 5.1-10.1 |
| Session 2 | Discuss debate etiquette and compare/contrast it to job interview etiquette. Read historical background on the Great Debaters then watch a scene from the movie (available on YouTube or from the public library). “The hot seat” scene consists of tryouts and the actors use terms such as “resolved”. Learners come to understand a primary source vs. a secondary source. | Ask Ss to pair up and discuss what they found interesting from the scene and what they might feel nervous or apprehensive about doing in class. As exit tickets, Ss should write down on Post-Its one thing they look forward to and one goal or skill they would like to work on. | Those willing may share out. | Anchor 4 RI/RL 5.4-10.4  Anchor 6 RI 5.6-10.6 |
| Session 3 | Divide the class into two teams. Discuss the term “status quo” and how the Pro team defends the status quo and the Con team convinces the audience that there is significant need to change the status quo. Give a topic that isn’t highly controversial, for example the topic: Disney movies are inappropriate for young audiences or oranges are a better on-the-go snack than apples. | Give teams 15 minutes to develop intro statements w/o research. Their life experience will have to suffice for this practice run, as finding relevant evidence hasn’t been taught yet. Make sure teams have captains who will share out. | Provide teams with feedback afterwards, starting w/positive comments. | Anchor 4 W 5.4-12.4  Anchor 1 SL 5.1-10.1  Anchor 3 L 4.3-7.3 |
| Session 4 | Choose a list of timely topics for the class to debate. Allow learners to vote on the topics, but not to choose their stance this time. Explain the idiom “playing devil’s advocate” and how important it is to know information about both sides of an issue before trying to defend someone’s own personal stance in a real-life situation. Either assign learners to teams randomly or by strengths/skill-sets. | Learners may assign each other roles or T may assign roles, but it is advisable that each team have the following roles and those taking them be very aware of their responsibilities:   1. Task manager/Time-keeper 2. Intro presenter 3. Main questioner 4. Final presenter 5. Fact checker | Team members should share their roles with the whole class and verify that they understand their responsibilities. Learners may write down on “exit tickets” what strengths or characteristics they possess that will aid them in their roles as well as what support they might need from the teacher and classroom volunteers. | Anchor 1 SL 5.1-10.1  TIF Effective Communication Skill 1 |

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| **Writing and Research Phase\*** | **Whole-Class Lesson** | **Small-Group, Partner, and Individual Work** | **Whole-Class Wrap-Up** | **Standards Addressed** |
| Session 5 | Explicitly teach finding reliable sources online. Share a few examples of sources and ask learners which would support which side, pro or con? Use a different topic than the one they will be debating in class. Keep it simple, as it is to demonstrate choosing appropriate sources. Ask if one source is stronger than another. Why might this be? What information makes it stronger? Discuss “bias.” How does it differ from having an opinion? Also, talk about different types of sites: blogs, .edu, .com, .gov, .org and in what ways each might have biases.  The following affect validity and strength of sources used in an academic debate:   * More recent publication date * Reputable journal (careful! *New York Times* is reputable, but referring to an editorial, is not as strong as referring to something well-researched and less biased) * First-hand, second-hand, third-hand | Depending on the size of the teams, learners may work in pairs or small groups of 3s at computers (or wherever they have Internet connection). Circulate the room to assist learners in finding at least 3 reliable sources that support their stance. Pairs/groups should write down web addresses and at least 2 reasons for choosing each. | Learners may share out how successful they were and if they stumbled upon any sources that their opposition might find useful. | Anchor 7 W 5.7-12.7  Anchor 1 RI/RL 7.1-10.1  Anchor 4 RI/RL 5.4-10.4  Anchor 6 RI 5.6-10.6  Anchor 7 RI 3.7-10.7  Anchor 8 RI 5.8-10.8 |
| Session 6 | Discuss the gravity of plagiarism and how to make a claim without plagiarizing.  Give an example of explicit plagiarism. Give another example of plagiarism, even though a few words were changed. Demonstrate “paraphrase” and “quote” and how these tools can aid learners in making a claim. Make it very clear that even when they paraphrase and quote a text, they still need to cite it! Practice the language, “according to” and “as stated by.” | Pairs or small groups revisit the websites they wrote down as being valid and useful last class session and this time do the following:   1. Write a claim at the top of their paper. 2. Look for specific statements or figures that support their claim. 3. Decide if they want to paraphrase or quote. 4. Write a citation using [www.easybib.com](http://www.easybib.com) 5. Transfer the info onto an index card for easy reference during the debate. |  | Anchor 7 RI 3.7-10.7  Anchor 8 RI 5.8-10.8  Anchor 1 W 5.1-10.1  Anchor 6 W 4.6-10.6  Anchor 8 W 5.8-10.8  TIF Academic Language Skill 5 |
| Session 7 | Review plagiarism, paraphrasing, and quoting. Practice the language “according to” and “as stated by.” | Pairs or small groups revisit the websites they wrote down as being valid and useful last class session and this time do the following:   1. Write a claim at the top of their paper. 2. Look for specific statements or figures that support their claim. 3. Decide if they want to paraphrase or quote. 4. Write a citation using www.easybib.com 5. Transfer the info onto an index card for easy reference during the debate. |  | Anchor 7 RI 3.7-10.7  Anchor 8 RI 5.8-10.8  Anchor 1 W 5.1-10.1  Anchor 6 W 4.6-10.6  Anchor 8 W 5.8-10.8  TIF Academic Language Skill 5 |
| Session 8 | Share with learners the outline of the format of an academic debate. Learners individually read an opening statement for a debate on a different topic as the teacher times the learners (uninformed). Most likely, it will take learners a bit longer to closely read the text than the four minutes allowed for the opening statements. Inform learners how long it took the majority of the class to read the opening statement and point out that during the actual debate, it can only be 4 min, but must be clear and concise, not rushed. Demonstrate then ask a couple of learners to try. Goals:   * Make eye contact with audience. * Use a “teacher voice” (project). * Annunciate, especially key words. * Practice, practice, practice and cut out least important information (or irrelevant info) that might go over the time limit. | Teams begin collaborating to write their opening statements. Some learners work on writing key claims, others work on choosing best paraphrases and quotes to use with claims, yet others work as listeners and guides to make suggestions and help insert transitions and remove irrelevant information. |  | Anchor 1 SL 5.1-10.1  Anchor 1 W 5.1-10.1  Anchor 6 W 4.6-10.6  Anchor 3 L 4.3-7.3 (Apply knowledge of lang. to understand how lang. functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style and to comprehend more fully. E.g. choose lang. that expresses ideas precisely, eliminating wordiness.)  TIF Academic Language Skill 5 |
| Session 9 | Review choosing relevant information for opening statements and practice reading/timing. | Teams work in separate rooms to complete their opening statements; practice reading in front of others; give feedback to the reader on projection, rate, and eye contact; and make any last minute changes to evidence/source notations. |  |  |
| Session 10 | Discuss effective questioning techniques. Asking questions is an opportunity to trick the opposition, but the questioner needs to know how to pose the question and how to be quick to redirect the question if the opposition is prepared for it. If possible, demonstrate with a classroom volunteer how a simple direct question is ineffectual and actually open up an opportunity for the opposition to speak more freely about its stance then show how a well-thought out question can trap the opposition. If this is not possible, show a scene or two from *The Great Debaters* or some academic debates online. | Practice asking effective questions and using questioning time wisely. Rewrite any questions that won’t lead to positive results. |  | Anchor 1 SL 5.1-10.1  Anchor 3 SL 8.3-12.3 |
| Session 11 | Complete a debate sentence dictation with learners standing and reading each sentence aloud to the class. This serves as a review of the content learned thus far and helps learners prepare for the upcoming debate and Conversation Strategies quiz. Have learner volunteers come to the board to write sentences they heard. T facilitates discussion of possible corrections. | Use the remainder of the period to work in small groups on making sure that everyone knows his/her part in the upcoming debate, the evidence is strong, and the timing is down. |  |  |
| Session 12 | Review debate purpose, etiquette and format. Allow for some Q/A. Learners take the “Conversation Strategies” quiz. | Use the rest of the period for teams to practice their intro statements, questioning, and closing statements in separate rooms. Remind them that they may wish to make some changes to their closing statements as a team the day of the actual debate. |  |  |

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| **Presentation**  **Phase** | **Whole-Class Lesson** | **Small-Group, Partner, and Individual Work** | **Whole-Class Wrap-Up** | **Standards Addressed** |
| Session 13 | Direct teams to their tables or recruit learners to help structure tables for the debate. Review etiquette and format/time-frame. Greet moderators and audience members. | Give learners some time to review their notes and discuss last-minute strategies. Arrange tables so two face the moderators and are in close proximity to each other, preferably forming a V, so pro/con teams can see each other as well for the questioning period. | After the debate, give teams their final scores and ask that everyone mingle. Learners will be interested in feedback from the moderators and will also want to congratulate each other on a job well-done! | Anchor 2 SL 8.2-12.2  Anchor 3 SL 8.3-12.3  Anchor 4 SL 5.4-10.4  TIF Academic Language Skill 4 |
| Session 14 | Brainstorm possible class fieldtrips that allow for civic engagement and volunteer opportunities. Ask learners to vote on their top two choices then select which field trip they would like to debate in favor of (pro/con will be selected at random, as there is no “status quo” in this case). Discuss the criteria for determining a significantly meaningful fieldtrip, so learners have an idea what to research and how to pose questions.  Possible criteria:   * Chance to learn new skills * Proximity to school * Opportunity to help the most people * Chance to obtain some credentials * Opportunity to help the neediest people * Chance to make the longest lasting impact | Give teams roles as was done with the previous debate. Either assign roles or allow learners to self-select, whichever works best for your classroom. Give learners access to the Internet and ask them find evidence that supports their fieldtrip of choice is ideal for the class, especially according to the criteria given. |  | Anchor 1 SL 5.1-10.1 |
| Session 15 | Review choosing relevant information for opening statements and practice reading/timing. | Teams work in separate rooms to complete their opening statements; practice reading in front of others; give feedback to the reader on projection, rate, and eye contact; and make any last minute changes to evidence/source notations. Write some questions and predict some possible rebuttals. |  |  |

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| **Presentation and**  **Celebration** | **Hold a second in-class debate on which civic engagement fieldtrip would be ideal for this class. Determine which team had the strongest argument and best evidence. Make arrangements for the class to go on this fieldtrip and bring along any classroom volunteers who assisted with the academic debate project. Enjoy! Our classes have volunteered at Simpson House, Our Saviour Housing, and Feed My Starving Children.** |

\*A reminder that the phases are not rigid.