



# CULTURE AND COLLECTIVE LEARNING DEBATE

## Preparation

In this activity, students are asked to think about collective learning and its relationship to culture. One group will argue that culture is a product of collective learning, the other will argue that it is not a product of collective learning. This deepens students understanding of collective learning, and illustrates how collective learning has social and cultural implications, not just those related to information, goods, and services.

## Practices

### *Claim testing*

One part of a good debate is when the debaters back up their claims with solid support. Another good part is when people are called out for their lack of support when making claims. As students prep for this debate, remind them to use the claim testers, both for making their arguments and poking holes in their opponent's argument. Claim testers should also help them identify disconfirming evidence and help them identify potential counterarguments in advance.

## Process

Divide the class into two "position" groups. One group will argue that culture is a product of collective learning, the other will argue that it is not a product of collective learning. Tell your students that each group is responsible for researching its position and preparing an argument to support its point of view. For this particular debate, they may use personal examples of cultural change in their own lives.

Questions students might consider in preparing their arguments:

- What's the difference between cultural knowledge and academic knowledge?
- Does the manner in which we communicate academic knowledge reflect our culture?
- Do we go to school to learn academic knowledge or cultural norms?
- Is saying "bless you" when somebody sneezes a reflection of collective learning, culture, or both? What about asking someone to cover their mouth when they sneeze?

Remind students to use the Debate Prep Worksheet to help them prepare for their debate. Don't forget to review the Debate Format Guide so they are aware of how much time they have for each section of the debate. It's also helpful to remind them to look at the Debate Rubric as they prepare since this will help ensure they meet all debate criteria.

Use the Debate Rubric to grade the student groups and decide who argued their position more effectively.



# CULTURE AND COLLECTIVE LEARNING DEBATE

## Preparation

In this activity, you're asked to think about collective learning and its relationship to culture. You'll argue that culture either is or is not a product of collective learning. This will expand your understanding of collective learning, and show you how collective learning has social and cultural implications, not just those related to information, goods, and services.

## Practices

### *Claim testing*

One part of a good debate is when the debaters back up their claims with solid support. Another good part is when people are called out for their lack of support when making claims. As you prep for this debate, use claim testers, both for making arguments and poking holes in your opponent's argument. Claim testers should also help you identify disconfirming evidence and potential counterarguments in advance.

## Process

Your teacher will divide your class into two "position" groups. One group will argue that culture is a product of collective learning, the other will argue that culture is not a product of collective learning. Each group is responsible for researching its position and preparing an argument to support its point of view. For this particular debate, you may use personal examples of cultural change in your own life.

Questions you might consider in preparing your argument:

- What's the difference between cultural knowledge and academic knowledge?
- Does the manner in which we communicate academic knowledge reflect our culture?
- Do we go to school to learn academic knowledge or cultural norms?
- Is saying "bless you" when somebody sneezes a reflection of collective learning, culture, or both? What about asking someone to cover their mouth when they sneeze?

Remember to use the Debate Prep Worksheet to help prepare for the debate. Don't forget to review the Debate Format Guide so you are aware of how much time you have for each section of the debate. It's also helpful to revisit the Debate Rubric as you prepare since this will help make sure you meet all debate criteria. Your teacher will use the Debate Rubric to decide which group argued their position more effectively.



# CULTURE AND COLLECTIVE LEARNING DEBATE

## Debate Format Guide

Debates typically follow a very specific format and set of rules to make sure that everyone has equal opportunities to argue their positions. This is one possible format. Be sure to have a timer available so that groups stay within the given time limits.

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1. Coin toss to determine which side goes first.
  2. Team A has 4-6 minutes to present their position.
  3. Team B has 4-6 minutes to present their position.

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**Break: Each team has 3-5 minutes to prepare a 2-minute rebuttal.**

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4. Team A has 2 minutes to present their rebuttal.
  5. Team B has 2 minutes to present their rebuttal.

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**Break: Each team has 3-5 minutes to prepare a 1-minute closing statement.**

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6. Team A has 1 minute to present their rebuttal.
  7. Team B has 1 minute to present their rebuttal.

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**Debate Ends: Winner of the debate is determined by using the Debate Rubric.**



## DEBATE RUBRIC

**Directions:** Use this rubric to evaluate debates. Mark scores and related comments in the scoring sheet that follows.

	Below Standard (1)	Approaching Standard (2)	At Standard (3)	Above Standard (4)
<b>Overall Argument</b>	Argument lacks logic and is unclear. Argument lacks supporting evidence.	Presents argument somewhat unclear. Uses at least one supporting piece of evidence.	Presents argument somewhat clearly. Some supporting evidence is provided.	Presents argument extremely clearly. Gives supporting evidence for all points made.
<b>Explanation of Ideas and Information</b>	Does not present information, arguments, ideas, or findings clearly, concisely, or logically. Argument lacks robust supporting evidence. It's difficult to follow the line of reasoning. Uses information that is not in line with the overall purpose. Does not consider opposing or alternative perspectives.	Presents information, arguments, ideas, or findings in ways that are not always clear, concise, or logical. Argument is supported by only some robust evidence. The line of reasoning is sometimes difficult to follow. Uses information that is only sometimes in line with the overall purpose. Attempts to consider and address opposing or alternative perspectives but does not do so clearly or completely.	Presents information, arguments, ideas, or findings clearly, concisely, or logically. Argument is well supported. The line of reasoning is logical and easy to follow and uses information that is appropriate for the purpose and audience. Clearly and completely addresses alternative or opposing perspectives.	Does an exceptional job presenting information, arguments, ideas, or findings clearly, concisely, and logically. Argument is well supported with robust, relevant, and interesting evidence. The line of reasoning is logical, easy to follow, well crafted, and uses information that is appropriate for the purpose and audience. Clearly and completely addresses relevant alternative or opposing perspectives.
<b>Rebuttal and Closing Statement</b>	No rebuttal offered. Makes no arguments against points the other side made. Does not explain why their side has the strongest argument.	Makes one or two points in rebuttal, but the logic is somewhat questionable or not supported by evidence. Makes one or two points against the points the other side made, but the logic is somewhat questionable. Explains why their side had the strongest argument, but the logic is flawed.	Makes some logical points as rebuttals, but doesn't support all points with evidence. Makes some logical arguments against the points the other side made. Explains why their side has the strongest argument, but could give more reasons.	Makes an abundance of logical points as rebuttals, and all points are supported with evidence. Makes an abundance of logical points against the points of the other side. Is thorough and logical in the explanation for why their side has the strongest argument.
<b>Eyes, Body, and Voice</b>	Does not look at the audience or make eye contact. Lacks poise (appears nervous, fidgety, slouchy). Speaks in a way that is hard to understand.	Makes infrequent eye contact with the audience. Shows some poise (limited fidgeting or nervousness). Speaks clearly most of the time, but may be difficult to understand or hear at times.	Keeps eye contact with the audience most of the time—only glances at notes or slides. Shows poise and confidence. Speaks clearly and is easy to understand.	Keeps eye contact with the audience throughout. Shows exceptional poise and confidence. Speaks clearly and in an engaging way that is interesting to listen to.



# DEBATE RUBRIC

Name:  Date:

**Directions:** Use this table to evaluate and comment on elements of a debate. Put an X in the cell that denotes the grade. Use the other cells for comments.

	Below Standard (1)	Approaching Standard (2)	At Standard (3)	Above Standard (4)	Score
Overall Argument					
Explanation of Ideas and Information					
Rebuttal and Closing Statement					
Eyes, Body, and Voice					
<b>Total Score</b>					