# **CLN3M Debate Dates: December 5, 7,9th**

# **Analyzing and Debating a Legal Issue**

Questions for debate:

1. **Should terminally ill patients have access to physician assisted suicide?**
2. **Should cannabis be legalized without the need for a prescription?**
3. **Spare the rod? Should spanking a child be illegal?**
4. **Should police officers wear body cameras?**
5. **Should we get rid of plea bargains?**
6. **Should a life sentence mean spending the rest of one’s life incarcerated?**
7. **Should serious indictable offences be subject to mandatory minimum sentencing?**
8. **Should Canada reinstate the death penalty?**
9. **Should the police practice of ‘carding’ be illegal?**
10. **Should national security trump personal privacy? (anti-terrorism)**
11. **Should sex-offender lists be public?**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

**Part I – Preparation**

1. You have been assigned to a team on either the “yes” or “no” side of this debate in response to the question above. You will work with your team to complete thorough research and come up with compelling arguments to defend your respective positions on the issue. You will have two periods of class time to prepare for your debate.
2. The arguments presented by your group must include a clear stance in reference to your assigned position, references to the laws of Canada, relevant cases, research, and/or professional opinions on your topic.

**Part II - Debate**

This portion of your mark will be derived from your performance in the debate, along with the performance of your team as a whole. All four categories of the Achievement Chart will be evaluated in Part Two (see “Debate Structure” and the “Debate Rubric”).



**DEBATE GUIDELINES**

**Structure:**

Teams will consist of three members each. Every person will have an opportunity to speak for 2-3 minutes. The debate will begin with opening arguments by each side. After each side has established its case, each team member will take a turn at refuting the opposing side’s perspective and building its own case. The following are specific preparation and debate guidelines.

**Preparation:**

1. Review/study all the material you’ve gathered for your topic. Find all the evidence you can to support your point of view on the topic. Make note cards which contain quotes, statistics, expert testimony, etc. on your side of the topic.
2. Do the same thing for the opposing side. In other words, what do you think the other team will be saying to support its point of view? What evidence do you think they will use? Anticipate how they will present their case. Also, anticipate what the other team may say to rebut your arguments.
3. Work together as a team. Develop one set of note cards to be used during the debate. Sort similar quotes and data into categories. It will be easier to draw on what you need during the debate if your materials are organized.

**Opening Arguments:**

1. Welcome the opposing team with respect and enthusiasm
2. Provide an overview of your position on the topic
3. Clearly define your position. Be decisive. Show conviction.
4. Provide supporting material (e.g. statistics, citations, quotations, definitions, etc.) to back up your position. This shows that your position is based on careful research.
5. Describe your understanding of how your position and the quote/data you’ve just offered are related. In other words, tie your point of view on the topic to your evidence.
6. You may want to offer a challenge to the opposing team, but challenges should be used sparingly and only when you feel the argument you’ve just presented is **so strong** that there is very little question that it can be successfully refuted.

**Body of the Debate:**

1. Keep track of the points made by the opposing team and try to respond to or rebut each point.
2. Consider assigning the role of record keeping to a few team members. Their job is to record all your team’s points that were NOT argued away effectively by the opposing side. Also keep track of all the points made by the other team that your team DID effectively refute. These records will help during the few minutes your team will have to prepare your closing arguments.
3. Keep your arguments new and inspired – resist repeating arguments. Look for other ways to creatively illustrate your points.
4. Be creative - creativity shows confidence in your position. Just make sure your creativity is relevant to the situation.
5. If your opposition knocks down your points – be resilient. Don’t feel defeated. Show your confidence. Try a new tactic.
6. This is a team effort. Keep your mind on the whole team and ensure that your speech contributes to the overall perspective and position of your team.

**Closing Arguments:**

1. The purpose of the closing statements is to put together all the strongest points of your team and present them with complete conviction. You want to dispel any residual feeling of failed points or points won by the other team. If you’ve kept a record of points made, use it now to construct a statement of how your opening position was proven by your team.
2. Closing statements are truly a creative and important process. The right kind of creative flourish at this point can wrap up your argument beautifully.

**Timeline of the Debate:**

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| --- | --- |
| Opening Arguments:  Speaker #1 team one. Speaker #1 team two | Flip a coin to see who goes first.  Each speaker gets two minutes to give opening remarks. |
| Team Huddle | 2 minutes (during this time, the team determines its line of argument, gets data to support it from note cards, decides who will speak next) |
| Speaker #2 (team 1) | 2-3 minutes (speaker tries to refute arguments from opening statements of opposing team. Then builds own case.) |
| Team huddle | 2 minutes |
| Speaker #2 (team 2) | 2-3 minutes (speaker tries to refute arguments from speaker #1. Build own case.) |
| Team huddle | 2 minutes |
| Speaker #3 (team 1) | 2-3 minutes |
| Team huddle | 2 minutes |
| Speaker #3 (team 2) | 2-3 minutes |
| Team huddle | 2 minutes |
| Closing Arguments:   * Speaker #1 from team one. Speaker #1 from team two. | Each team gets two minutes to close. |  |

**Debate Monitor teams: Guidelines**

When your team is not presenting, your team will assume the role of a debate monitor for one of the other debates. During the debate, monitors fulfill the important responsibility of tracking the content and process of the debate. At the end of the debate, they confer and come to a consensus about the debate winner.

Debate monitors will debrief the debate. They will provide feedback to the participants and discuss the merits of each case and announce a winner.

Here are some questions to keep in the back of your mind as you listen carefully to each "team'’ presentation:

1. How strong was the opening statement?
2. Did they make use of all of the sources available to them?
3. Did they present a variety of points?
4. Were the points relevant to the debate topic?
5. Were the points brief and succinct?
6. Did the team rotate speakers? Did they honor time guidelines?
7. Did the team use quotes and statistics accurately?
8. Did you see evidence of respect for the opposing team?
9. How strong was the closing statement?

Take notes during the debate, recording the arguments and data of each side. Use the two-minute huddle time to record as much specific information as you can. Identify those arguments that were successfully refuted and those that were not on both sides. Following the closing statements, use your notes and the questions above for assessing the presentation of both teams. Confer with the other monitors and come to consensus concerning the winner of the debate.