Hat Debates

This activity forces you to speak about a topic with little time to prepare and doesn’t give you any options about which position to argue. It’s a good way to practice three key debating skills: thinking on your feet, arguing a random side of an issue that you might not agree with, and listening to and repeating your opponent’s point.

Here’s what to do:

1. Get into pairs. Cut the topics below into strips & put them in a hat (or some other container)
2. Take turns pulling topics out of the hat. The affirmative speaker goes first. They say: **“The affirmative team believes that [topic] because [reason]\*.**
3. The negative speaker then rebuts the affirmative speaker. Their script goes: **“The proposition believes that [topic] because [sum up their reason]. But this is untrue/unimportant because [reason]\*.”**
4. The affirmative speaker should then counter with a rebuttal or another point against the topic. They say: **“The opposition have stated that [sum up their reason], but this wrong because [reason]\*.”**
5. Continue until you can’t think of any more arguments.

*\*NOTE: Must be a valid and strong argument, not just ‘it’s better and I like it’. If you’re finding it too hard, you can give each other a few minutes to google it and get ideas for your points first.*

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| Actors and sports players earn too much money | Everyone should eat vegetarian. |
| Mobile phones should be allowed at school | Books are better than television |
| All petrol cars should be replaced by electric cars | Single-use plastics should be banned |
| Social media is harmful to teenagers | Parents should be allowed to smack their kids. |
| Climate change is a real and urgent problem. | Female sports players should be paid the same. |
| PE should not be compulsory in schools | We should replace petrol with biofuel. |
| It’s a waste of time to learn foreign languages | Creation makes more sense than evolution. |
| It would be a good thing to be famous | Students should have a say in the school curriculum. |
| Students should not have to wear a school uniform | Police should hold everyone’s DNA on a database |
| Humans are too dependent on technology | Public transport should be free for all citizens. |
| Girls and boys should not go to the same schools | Home schooling is better than traditional schooling. |
| Voting in Australia should not be compulsory | Petrol cars should be replaced by electric cars. |
| The death penalty should be banned | Sports players are not good role models. |
| More refugees should be allowed into Australia | The date of Australia Day should be changed. |