

BRAINS ON! PRESENTS

INTRODUCING DEBATE WITH SMASH BOOM BEST

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SUGGESTED GRADES: 3-5

SUGGESTED DURATION: 9-12 DAYS 45 MIN/SESSION



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ABOUT THE SHOW: Smash Boom Best is a debate podcast for kids and their families, produced by the award-winning creators of Brains On! at American Public Media. Every episode, a kid co-host judges an epic battle between two adult debaters as they tackle topics like cats vs. dogs, chocolate vs. cheese, and books vs. movies. Debaters use facts and passion to make their case, teaching listeners to defend their opinions along the way.

OVERVIEW: Introducing Debate with Smash Boom Best is designed to teach students the fundamentals of debate and the process of planning, drafting, revising, editing and presenting an argument. Below, you'll find a suggested timeline, which we've outlined on pages 2 - 7.

IMMERSING	GATHERING IDEAS	RESEARCHING	DRAFTING	REVISING & EDITING	PRESENTING
2-3 days	1 day	2-3 days	2 days	1-2 days	1 day

On pages 8 - 16, you'll find a scorecard, worksheets, student work samples and other classroom resources. We encourage you to customize the timeline and format to fit your needs!

PART 1: IMMERSING (2-3 DAYS | 45 MIN/SESSIONS)

MATERIALS PODCAST PLAYER, SPEAKER, CHART PAPER, MARKERS, SCORECARDS

DAY 1 Introduce your class to the podcast! Listen to an episode of *Smash Boom Best* (pause as needed), and outline the structure of the debate. A sample debate outline is available on page 8.

DAY 2-3 While listening to an episode of [Smash Boom Best](#), students should jot down pros and cons for each side using the scorecard on page 11.

Pause the episode after each round to discuss the pros and cons of each debaters' arguments, and ask students to award a point to whomever they thought did a better job.

At the end of the podcast, before the judge reveals their chosen winner, designate one side of the classroom Team X and the other side of the room Team Y. Ask students to stand on one side or the other to show support for their favorite team.

Do students agree with the judge's decision? Disagree? Why? Discuss what facts and arguments were most convincing.

SUGGESTIONS Visit smashboom.org and have your students vote for their favorite team on the [Smash Boom Best](#) online poll. Tweet [@SmashBoomBest](#) and tell them whether your class agrees or disagrees with the kid-judge's verdict!

As a reminder, on the podcast, it's the judge's job to decide: which side is cooler? They get to define "cooler" however they like. Was the argument funnier? Did it include more facts? Was the delivery moving? You may choose to use a different judging criteria in your class.

PART 2: GATHERING IDEAS (1 DAY | 45 MIN SESSION)

MATERIALS CHART PAPER, MARKERS, WHITEBOARD

DAY 4 Identify and chart characteristics of good debate topics.

Brainstorm (independently or with peers) possible topics that might make a good debate.

Narrow down possible debate topics.

Possible questions to consider:

- Are the debate topics related?
- Can we research the topics?
- Are people interested in defending and hearing about these topics?

Choose or vote on debate topics and create teams.

SUGGESTIONS We suggest creating teams of 4-5 students per side, but do whatever makes sense for your classroom.

PART 3: RESEARCHING (2-3 DAYS, 30-45 MIN SESSIONS)

MATERIALS RESEARCH SOURCES, PEN AND PAPER, COMPUTER

DAY 5-7 Discuss: What are **reliable sources**?

Note-taking tips

- Remind students to jot down the author and source to give credit.
- Use a T Chart to jot down 8-10 pros for your team. Emphasize the importance of writing notes in your own words to avoid plagiarism.

Create a Works Cited document for your team.

SUGGESTIONS Depending on the familiarity of topics chosen and the age of students, you may choose to modify or skip the research portion, or switch the research and drafting stages.

Here are a few kid-friendly websites students can use to find news articles:

- [DOGOnews](#)
- [Newsela](#)
- [The Washington Post's KidsPost](#)

We also encourage you to take your students to your school library to check out books on their topics. Check with your school and local public library to see what online and print resources might be available to them.

PART 4: DRAFTING (2 DAYS, 45 MIN SESSIONS)

MATERIALS DEBATE DRAFT (SEE PAGE 12), RESEARCH NOTES, SOURCES

DAY 8 Model an example of the Introduction and the Declaration of Greatness. Explain what pros and cons are.

With their teams, students should complete the Introduction and Declaration of Greatness sections.

- Introduction: present your team and debate topic, share a few attention-grabbing facts, and clearly state your team's claim.
- Declaration of Greatness: list eight of your team's strongest pros.

DAY 9 Model an example of a Rebuttal, the Micro-Round, and The Final 6.

With their teams, students should complete the Rebuttal, the Micro-round, and The Final 6 sections.

- Rebuttals: ways / facts / examples that show how your team is better than the ways / facts / examples listed in your opposition's Declaration of Greatness.

Note: You will need to make a copy of each team's Declaration of Greatness to share with the opposition.

- Micro-round: see page 9 for micro-round samples.

Note: See [Smash Boom Best Owls vs Bats](#) podcast (micro round at 18min 50sec) for an example.

- The Final 6: exactly 6 words to sum up your team's argument.

SUGGESTIONS Encourage teams to divide and conquer, or pair up to complete the different sections of their team's presentation.

Create a Google Doc to share with each team so they may work simultaneously.

Modify the number of facts included in the Declaration of Greatness, and/or change the focus of rounds 2-4 as you see fit for your students.

See page 9 for a list of other Micro-round challenges to do with your class.

PART 5: REVISE & EDIT (1-2 DAYS, 45 MIN SESSIONS)

MATERIALS DEBATE DRAFT (SEE PAGE 12), RESOURCES, NOTES

DAY 10-11 Brainstorm ways to revise and model

- Add transition words.
- Use topic-specific vocabulary and explain it.
- State your sources.
- Give specific details about who, what, where, when, why, or how.
- Try different ways to sequence and word your facts so they create the strongest argument.
- Are your sentences clearly written?

Brainstorm ways to edit and model.

- Spellcheck.
- Check for run-on sentences and proper punctuation.
- Check for verb tense and agreement.

PART 6: PRESENT DEBATE (1 DAY)

MATERIALS DEBATE DRAFT (SEE PAGE 12)

DAY 12 Teams should choose which section each member will read aloud.

Present in front of your class.

Encourage audience members to keep score for each round.

When debates have concluded, allow audience members to vote for the winner of the debate.

SUGGESTIONS Tweet [@SmashBoomBest](https://twitter.com/SmashBoomBest) and let us know how your debate went.

DEBATE STRUCTURE

This is a condensed version of the debate format, ideal for classroom use.

EXAMPLE OF DAY 1 INTRODUCTION

- Present debate topic
- Introduce both teams and host
- Run through the structure of the debate

ROUND 1: DECLARATION OF GREATNESS

- Team 1 Declaration of Greatness & Team 2 Rebuttal
- Team 2 Declaration of Greatness & Team 1 Rebuttal
- Award 1st point

ROUND 2: Micro-round

- Team 2 Micro-round
- Team 1 Micro-round
- Award 2nd point

ROUND 3: Final 6

- Team 1 Final 6
- Team 2 Final 6
- Award 3rd point

CONCLUSION

- Audience votes on winner

SAMPLE MICRO-ROUNDS

Here are Micro-round samples from our show. Pick whichever one you like!

YOUTUBE STAR: Imagine your side is a YouTube star! What's your vibe? Are you inspirational? Overshare-y? Make a YouTube video as your side, and tell us why you're the Smash Boom Best.

AMUSEMENT PARK: Take us on a tour of your side's totally cool theme park! Describe the rides, the food, and the fun at your side's amusement park.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR: Write a letter to the editor complaining about the other side.

PUNDAMONIUM: We want you to tickle our punny bones with all the best puns related to your side. You'll trade puns with your opponent in three rounds, so you'll need at least three killer ones to hype up your side and/or roast the other team. This way to the pun show!

SEUSSIAN STYLINGS: Write a Dr. Seuss style ode to your side.

INTERNATIONAL HOLIDAY: Imagine that there's an international holiday devoted to your side. What's it called? What day of the year is it? What are the traditions, lore, and decorations associated with this special day? Tell us all about your favorite holiday and how you celebrate.

SONNET SLAM: Write a sonnet about your side in the style of William Shakespeare.

BONUS: SNEAK ATTACK ROUND

If you have extra time, include a Sneak Attack round in the final presentation. Select one of the creative prompts below, and give each side time to brainstorm a persuasive response.

BY ANY OTHER NAME: Let's pretend the side you're arguing for doesn't have a name. We'd like you to come up with a few alternative names for that thing. For example, if your team is arguing in favor of mountains, you might rename them dirt muscles, raised forests or mega-mounds!

SHARKNADO: How would your side defeat a swirling tornado of sharks? Anything goes! The most creative answer wins.

RHYME TIME: You have 60 seconds to come up with as many rhymes for your thing as you can. For example, if your team is arguing in favor of books, you might come up with looks, hooks, crooks and nooks.

HAIKU: Haiku is a Japanese style of non-rhyming poetry that consists of 17 syllables. Those 17 syllables are broken into three lines - the first line has five syllables, the second has seven and the last has five. Come up with two haikus - the first in favor of your side and the second arguing against the other side.

ACRONYMICAL: An acronym is an abbreviation formed by taking the first letter of a series of words. For example, the ZIP in zip code stands for Zone Improvement Plan, and UFO stands for unidentified flying object. Now, we want you to make the thing you're arguing for into an acronym. For instance, if your team is arguing in favor of forks, you might say FORKS stands for feeding oneself requires knowing silverware.

CHEER UP: Write a cheer about why your side is awesome. Spelling, clapping and appropriate dance moves are welcome.

SANDWICH ART: We want you to make up a sandwich inspired by your thing. What would the ingredients be and why did you choose them? Make us HUNGRY.

SCORECARD

NAME _____

TEAM	PROS	CONS
TEAM	PROS	CONS

DEBATE DRAFT

NAME _____

1. INTRODUCE YOUR TEAM/TOPIC, GIVE A FEW ATTENTION-GRABBING FACTS, AND CLEARLY STATE YOUR TEAM'S CLAIM (4-6 SENTENCES).

2. DECLARATION OF GREATNESS (TOP 8 REASONS WHY _____ ARE BETTER THAN _____.)

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. We are Team _____ and we are here to present the top 8 reasons why _____ are cooler than _____.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

3. REBUTTAL TO OPPOSITION (WHILE OPPONENTS MAY BE ABLE TO ____, MY TEAM CAN ____.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

4. MICRO-ROUND

5. THE FINAL 6

STUDENT WORK SAMPLE: WOLVES VS. COYOTES
DEBATE DRAFT | **TEAM COYOTE (GRADE 5)**

1. INTRODUCTION

Coyotes are the best! They are better than wolves in infinite ways. They can thrive for longer, they are extremely adaptive, and they are omnivores; they can eat anything! Their population is also spreading pretty quickly. From just California in the 1850's to a range from Alaska to Panama in 2000! Their population has tripled in just 20 years.

**2. DECLARATION OF GREATNESS
(TOP 8 REASONS WHY COYOTES ARE COOLER THAN WOLVES)**

Good morning, classmates. We are Team Coyote and we're here to present the top 8 reasons why coyotes are cooler than wolves.

1. Coyotes can thrive longer than wolves.
2. Coyotes can spread faster than wolves.
3. Coyotes can not only eat meat but plants and dead animals.
4. Coyotes' population has tripled in the last 20 years.
5. Coyotes have been seen in places like Panama.
6. Coyotes can run 65 miles per hour while hunting.
7. Coyotes can jump horizontally up to 4 meters while running at their top speed.
8. Coyotes are extremely adaptive.

**3. REBUTTAL TO OPPOSITION
(WHILE OPPONENTS MAY ____, MY TEAM ____)**

1. While wolves may be larger, coyotes are smaller and more agile.
2. While wolves are patient and very tolerant of each other, explaining how they are able to hunt in packs and work together, coyotes are independent and thrive better.
3. While wolves have blunt claws that help them to grip ice more easily than other animals, coyotes can jump horizontally about 4 meters.
4. While wolves are more popular now than any other time recorded in history, coyotes are popular in some other places like Arizona.
5. While wolves can run at 40 mph, coyotes can run up to 65 mph.
6. While wolves are very social animals, coyotes are very loyal to their family.
7. While wolves are an important part of the ecosystem, the world will not survive without coyotes.
8. While wolves can roam up to 12 miles per day, coyotes can travel very long distances.

4. MICRO-ROUND: LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Wolves are a disgrace! Those loved animals are taking over the world like crazy! And those coyotes? Oh, they're just genius! And they are being left behind all because of this dumb wolf? Nonsense! We should bring the actual geniuses back to stage and kick out the former ones. Wolves can't just hold the world for so long, right? And the wolves, they hunt for the cattle at night, right? Coyotes don't. And people still like wolves! This is very absurd. It's time to switch sides away from that vicious killer.

5. THE FINAL 6

Coyotes are ultimate survivors of history!

STUDENT WORK SAMPLE: WOLVES VS. COYOTES
DEBATE DRAFT | **TEAM WOLVES (GRADE 5)**

1. INTRODUCTION

Wolves are superior to coyotes for many reasons. I mean, come on! Wolves have abilities that coyotes cannot even compare to. Coyotes just can't even match up to the attractive and majestic wolves. Coyotes are sick and puny animals! Wolves however, their bodies help them stay comfortable and safe while traveling. Coyotes are just a third of the size that wolves are! Wolves even eat coyotes. They don't stand a chance! The wolves shall rule!

**2. DECLARATION OF GREATNESS
(TOP 8 REASONS WHY WOLVES ARE COOLER THAN COYOTES)**

Good morning, classmates. We are Team Wolves and we're here to present the top 8 reasons why wolves are cooler than coyotes.

1. Wolves have a variety of ways of communicating.
2. Wolves are patient and very tolerant of each other, explaining how they are able to hunt in packs and work together.
3. Wolves have blunt claws that help them to grip ice more easily than other animals.
4. Wolves are more popular now than any other time recorded in history.
5. Wolves are very successful hunters.
6. Wolves are very social animals.
7. Without wolves, the ecosystem can go haywire.
8. Wolves can roam up to 12 miles per day.

**3. REBUTTAL TO OPPOSITION
(WHILE OPPONENTS MAY ____, MY TEAM ____)**

1. Coyotes may jump high, but wolves have more stamina.
2. Coyotes may thrive longer, but that only happened because wolves were endangered and couldn't eat coyotes.
3. Coyotes may be able to run 65 mph while hunting, but wolves can hunt intelligently by tricking their prey.
4. While coyotes may be seen in Panama, there are over 30 types of wolves that live all over the world.
5. While coyotes are adaptive, wolves can survive even harsher and more extreme weather.
6. While coyotes may be omnivores, wolves maintain elk, moose, deer and caribou populations.
7. While coyote populations have tripled in the last 20 years, wolves have become more popular than any other time recorded in history.
8. Coyotes might be able to jump 4 meters horizontally, while running at top speed, but wolves can jump up to 16 meters in the air.

4. MICRO-ROUND: LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

We, Team Wolves, think that it is not fair that your articles and magazines write a lot about coyotes. Wolves are bigger than coyotes. Coyotes run away when they are challenged. Coyotes cause a lot of unnecessary damage. Coyotes cause more problems than wolves. For example, if coyotes eat vegetables in a field, they will leave a mess behind. Wolves eat coyotes. Clearly, wolves are better than coyotes. It seems that you are wasting your time writing about how coyotes are so amazing, because they are not. Arctic wolves can live in harsh climates, but what can coyotes do? Coyotes cannot survive those harsh climates, even if they are extremely adaptive. That's all probably a lie anyway. After all, coyotes are just small, puny animals. How could they adapt to such extreme conditions? Sounds so impossible. Wolves are so much better than coyotes.

5. THE FINAL 6

Coyotes are useless compared to wolves!!!!

**WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM TEACHERS.
IF YOU HAVE ANY FEEDBACK, SUGGESTIONS OR
QUESTIONS ON THIS CURRICULUM, PLEASE EMAIL US
AT HELLO@BRAINSON.ORG**