

**Fairfax Collegiate  
2026 Summer Program  
Elementary Debate Course Syllabus  
Rising Grades 4-6**



### Course Description

*Get started with rhetoric and debate.*

Craft arguments and rebuttals about topics that you and your fellow elementary students care about. Listen to be heard, and go head-to-head against classmates with empathy and courtesy.

Students in Elementary Debate speak up, think quickly, and explore different sides of an issue. They build their confidence and learn to express their ideas clearly. With supportive critique and plenty of practice, students become stronger, more thoughtful debaters.

Students learn the structure of formal debates and practice skills like crafting persuasive arguments, responding to opposing points, choosing effective words, and taking clear notes during speeches. They participate in frequent debate exercises, explore the power of metaphors, learn how to research evidence, and present their findings to the class. Each activity helps them build teamwork, quick thinking, and respectful communication.

Families receive a video of the final debate students participate in. Students leave the course with greater confidence, sharper reasoning skills, and a strong foundation for future public speaking and debate experiences.

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### Learning Objectives

<b>Course Goals</b>	<b>Debate Techniques:</b> Students learn how to tactfully debate relevant issues with one another. <b>Research:</b> Students learn the value of research in preparing for a debate. <b>Evidence:</b> Students learn how to craft an argument with evidence to support their assertions.
<b>Course Topics</b>	<b>Introduction to Debate:</b> Students learn the rules of debates and about the Middle School Public Debate Program. <b>Public Speaking:</b> Students learn how to develop effective public speaking skills. <b>Affirmative Argumentation:</b> Students learn how to tactfully argue their point of view, using

	<p>reasoning and evidence.</p> <p><b>Rebuttal:</b> Students learn how to respond to an argument from the opposing side in a debate.</p> <p><b>Note Taking:</b> Students learn how to effectively take notes on the points each speaker in a debate makes.</p> <p><b>Word Choice:</b> Students learn the importance of word choice in strengthening their arguments.</p> <p><b>Research (1):</b> Students learn techniques to conduct quality research on a given topic.</p> <p><b>Metaphor:</b> Students learn how to use metaphors to strengthen their arguments in a debate.</p> <p><b>Conduct a Debate:</b> Students work in groups to develop arguments and organize research to participate in a full-length debate.</p> <p><b>Presentation of Research:</b> Students learn how to present research they have gathered on a given topic.</p>
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## Course Schedule

<b>Class Meeting 1</b>	<p><b>Introduction to Debate:</b> Students learn the general structure of debates, particularly the Middle School Public Debate Program format.</p> <p><b>Public Speaking:</b> Students learn techniques to improve their public speaking abilities.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 2</b>	<p><b>Affirmative Argumentation:</b> Students learn how to argue their point of view in a debate using reasoning and evidence.</p> <p><b>Debate Exercise 1:</b> Students participate in their first debate on a pertinent topic.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 3</b>	<p><b>Rebuttal Skills:</b> Students learn how to argue against a particular point of view in a tactful manner.</p> <p><b>Team Member Roles:</b> Students learn the roles of each member on a debate team.</p> <p><b>Debate Exercise 2:</b> Students participate in another debate using the new skills they have learned.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 4</b>	<p><b>Flow Charts:</b> Students learn how to use flow charts to take notes on an opponent's argument.</p> <p><b>Tactful Criticism:</b> Students learn how to criticize an opponent's argument in a respectful manner.</p> <p><b>Word Choice:</b> Students learn how their choice of wording affects the power of their speech.</p> <p><b>Debate Exercise 3:</b> Students hold another debate to practice the techniques they have learned, particularly in regards to word choice.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 5</b>	<p><b>Research:</b> Students learn effective research techniques that can be used to prepare for debates.</p> <p><b>Final Debate Overview:</b> Students begin preparing for two formal debates which will take place on the last day of the program.</p> <p><b>Debate Exercise 4:</b> Students participate in another debate to practice the skills they have learned</p>

	throughout the week.
<b>Class Meeting 6</b>	<p><b>Metaphors:</b> Students learn how skilled speakers make references to classical mythology to enhance their imagery.</p> <p><b>Impacts:</b> Students learn how to persuade a judge by arguing that the outcome of their position is more desirable than that of the opponent's position.</p> <p><b>Debate Exercise 5:</b> Students hold a debate to practice the concepts they have learned, particularly how they address the impacts of their arguments.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 7</b>	<p><b>Research Presentation:</b> Students present the research they have found for the upcoming final debates.</p> <p><b>Debate Exercise 6:</b> Students participate in a debate, practicing the skills they have learned previously.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 8</b>	<p><b>Final Debate Preparation (Topic 1):</b> Students prepare each side of one of the debates they will hold on the final day of class.</p> <p><b>Debate Exercise 7:</b> Students participate in a debate to practice the skills they have previously learned</p>
<b>Class Meeting 9</b>	<p><b>Final Debate Preparation (Topic 2):</b> Students prepare each side of the other debate they will participate in on the final day of the class.</p> <p><b>Debate Exercise 8:</b> Students participate in a debate to review the skills they have learned throughout the class.</p>
<b>Class Meeting 10</b>	<p><b>Final Debate 1:</b> Students debate a topic after a week of preparation and research.</p> <p><b>Final Debate 2:</b> Students participate in another debate which they have spent the past week researching and preparing for.</p>