

Debate Judge

Mission: You are the judge at the Sunnyside debate. Read both speeches, score each one on claims, reasons, evidence, and counterclaims, and declare the winner based on which argument is better SUPPORTED, not which side you agree with.

Big question: How do we evaluate whether an argument is supported by reasons and evidence?

★ Warm-up: Rate the reason

Rate each reason strong or weak.

"Recess should be longer because studies show exercise improves focus." ✓ **Strong (evidence).**

"Recess should be longer because it's fun." ✓ **Weak (opinion).**

Key vocabulary

Evaluate	Judge how strong or good something is.
Evidence	Facts, statistics, expert findings, examples.
Anecdote	A short personal story; weak on its own as evidence.
Counterclaim	The opposing side's argument.

1 Box 1

Score the speeches

In the simulator: Score both speeches on all four criteria and pick a winner.

What did you notice?

2 Box 2

Fair judging

In the simulator: Make sure your scores are fair: each score within 1 point of an expert judge's.

Who wins, based on SUPPORT?

☐ Speaker A ☐ Speaker B

✓ **Speaker A**

3 Box 3

Name the weakness

What weakens Speaker B's argument? Choose all.

Choose all that apply.

☐ Exaggeration ("worst idea ever") ☐ Relying on one anecdote (a cousin's school) ☐ No statistics or research
☐ Too many statistics

✓ **Exaggeration ("worst idea ever"); Relying on one anecdote (a cousin's school); No statistics or research**

4 Box 4

Judge's decision

Write your judge's decision.

Decision

Look for: Names the winner; at least 6 words

Evidence from the speech

Look for: Cites specific evidence; an exact quote from the text; at least 12 words

Why the other lost

Look for: Explains the weakness; at least 12 words

5 Box 5

Legend: coach Speaker B Legend only

Write one strong reason WITH evidence that Speaker B could have used to argue for keeping phones.

Look for: Gives a reason; Includes evidence; at least 18 words

Exit ticket: answer the big question in your own words

How do we evaluate whether an argument is supported by reasons and evidence?

Look for: A strong argument has a clear claim, reasons that explain it, specific evidence (data, studies, examples), and a response to the other side. Opinions, exaggerations ("worst idea ever"), and single personal stories are weak support. Judge the support, not your own opinion.

Completion codes

Students see a code like **ABC-13** when they finish. The first part must match below. The letter is the level (E = Explorer, I = Investigator, L = Legend), and the number at the end is how many stars they earned.

Level	Code starts with
 Explorer	QQ9-E
 Investigator	10W-I
 Legend	16D-L

Watch for these misconceptions

- "A strong argument just needs strong feelings." Arguments need evidence.
- "Statistics always prove a claim." Evidence must be relevant and from a reliable source.
- "The central idea is the topic." The central idea is a full statement about the topic.