

## Lesson Plan: Discussing and debating current issues

<b>Level</b>	Advanced (C1–C2)
<b>Time</b>	60–90 minutes
<b>Skills</b>	Speaking, vocabulary
<b>Focus</b>	Debate structure; challenging language; evidence and stance; rhetorical devices

### OBJECTIVES

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Participate confidently in formal and informal debates in English
- Use language to challenge, refute, and build on arguments
- Support positions with evidence, examples, and reasoning
- Use rhetorical devices to make arguments more persuasive

### TARGET LANGUAGE & EXAMPLES

#### *Structured debate language*

- Opening: I would like to argue that... / It is my contention that...
- Building: Furthermore... / This is supported by the fact that...
- Challenging: I would dispute that claim. / With respect, the evidence suggests otherwise.
- Conceding: While that is a valid point... / I accept that, however...

#### *Rhetorical devices for impact*

- Tricolon (rule of three): This policy is expensive, ineffective, and fundamentally unfair.
- Rhetorical question: Is that really the kind of society we want to live in?
- Anaphora (repetition): We need action now. We need leadership now. We need change now.
- Inclusive language: We all know... / As a society, we must...

#### *Using evidence*

- According to recent data... / Research by [institution] suggests that...
- The statistics tell a clear story: ... / A clear example of this is...
- In practice, we can see this in... / As [well-known figure] argued,...

#### *Meaning & Nuance*

Function	Formal phrase	Neutral phrase	Informal
State position	I would like to propose that...	I think we should...	Look, the thing is...
Disagree	I'm afraid I must challenge that.	I don't agree with that.	Come on, that's not right.
Concede	While I acknowledge the validity of that point...	OK, fair point, but...	Yeah, but still...
Use evidence	Research by the OECD demonstrates that...	The data shows that...	According to the stats...

Summarise	In conclusion, the evidence clearly indicates...	So, to sum up...	Basically...
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## LESSON PROCEDURE

### 1. Warm-up: Best argument wins (10 min)

**Task:** Two students debate a topic for 2 minutes. Class votes on the better argument.

- Debrief: what made the winning argument more effective?

→ *Surfaces existing skills and identifies what to develop.*

### 2. Presentation (15 min)

**Task:** Debate language by function. Rhetorical devices with examples.

- Practise tricolon and rhetorical question aloud — feel the rhythm.
- Register spectrum: know which level you're operating at.

### 3. Formal debate (40 min)

**Task:** Two teams, one proposition, 3-minute opening speeches, rebuttals, floor questions.

- Topics: AI should be regulated globally. / University education should be free.
- Roles: opener, evidence specialist, rebuttal speaker, closer.
- Observer forms: note which rhetorical devices were used.

### 4. Debrief and self-assessment (15 min)

**Task:** Students identify: which phrases did they use well? Which could they have used?

- Set a personal language target for the next debate.

## TEACHER NOTES

- Formal debate is one of the highest-yield activities for C1/C2 learners — it integrates vocabulary, grammar, and discourse skills.
- Rhetorical devices feel artificial at first — after practising aloud several times, they become natural.

## EXTENSION / HOMEWORK

Choose one or more:

1. Prepare a 3-minute speech arguing for or against a current issue, using at least 3 rhetorical devices.
2. Write a formal rebuttal to an argument you disagree with, using evidence and concession language.
3. Watch a TED talk or political speech and identify the rhetorical devices used.