



***“SOCIAL SKILLS INTO THREE
DEBATE’S MANUALS
(Tutors, Students, Judges)”***

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1.- INTRODUCTION

The topic of the debate plays a crucial role in stimulating discussion and argumentation. It is typically a declarative sentence and can be based on policy, fact, or belief. The affirmative team presents the definition of the topic, clarifying how it is understood. Clear definitions are essential to ensure a common understanding among participants. The choice of debate topic is crucial in fostering stimulating discussions. Topics should be declarative and can be based on policy, fact, or belief. Additionally, the affirmative team must present a clear definition of the topic to ensure a shared understanding among participants.

Effective debating in a university setting requires not only strong arguments but also well-developed social skills. This document aims to provide guidance on developing and improving the necessary social skills for successful participation in university debates.

The British parliamentary style debates are highlighted as the most popular type of debates. In this style, two teams, the affirmative and the negative, present their arguments. The debate takes place in a hall divided into two sections, with the chairperson controlling the proceedings. Each speaker has a specific role and follows a predetermined order of presentations.

Social skills are essential for effective participation in debates among university students.



Here are some key skills that can help you excel in a debate:

1. **Active listening:** Pay attention to your peers' arguments and show genuine interest. This will allow you to better understand their viewpoints and respond more effectively.

- a) Comprehensive Understanding: pay careful attention to peers' arguments, ensuring a thorough grasp of their viewpoints.
- b) Analysing and Evaluating Arguments: develop the ability to critically assess the quality and validity of arguments presented.
- c) Building Empathy and Perspective-Taking: cultivate empathy to understand and appreciate differing perspectives.
- d) Developing Interpersonal Skills: enhance communication and collaboration with fellow debaters.

2. **Empathy:** Try to understand the perspectives and emotions of your debate partners, even if you disagree with them. Empathy will help you communicate in a more respectful and constructive manner.

- a) Understanding Diverse Perspectives: strive to comprehend and respect diverse viewpoints, even when in disagreement.
- b) Effective Communication: communicate respectfully and constructively, fostering open dialogue.
- c) Bridging Divides: seek common ground and promote understanding among debaters with differing opinions.
- d) Conflict Resolution: develop skills to manage conflicts and disagreements in a productive manner.
- e) Building Relationships: Foster positive relationships with debate partners, creating an environment of mutual respect.

3. **Clear communication:** Express your ideas clearly, concisely, and coherently. Use appropriate language, avoid unnecessary jargon, and focus on effectively conveying your arguments.

- a) Structure and organization.

- b) Use of language.
- c) Tone and delivery.
- d) Active engagement.
- e) Visual aids and supporting materials.

4. **Critical thinking:** Develop the ability to analyse and evaluate the arguments presented, both from your peers and yourself. Be able to identify weak points in arguments and present strong counterarguments.



- a) Analysing Arguments.
- b) Evaluating Evidence.
- c) Identifying Weak Points.
- d) Constructing Strong Counterarguments.
- e) Enhancing Problem-Solving Skills.
- f) Transferrable Skills.

5. **Respect and courtesy:** Maintain a respectful and polite tone throughout the debate, even in the presence of disagreements or differences of opinion. Avoid personal attacks and focus on discussing ideas and arguments themselves.

- a) Creating a Positive Atmosphere: foster a respectful and inclusive environment for all participants.
- b) Focusing on Ideas, Not Individuals: direct discussions towards the merits of arguments, avoiding personal attacks.
- c) Valuing Diverse Perspectives: acknowledge and appreciate the diversity of opinions and experiences.
- d) Constructive Criticism: provide feedback and criticism in a constructive manner, promoting growth and learning.

6. **Teamwork:** Participating in a debate involves collaborating with other students. Be able to work as a team, listen to others' ideas, and build upon them. Foster an environment of collaboration and mutual respect.

7. **Time management:** Make effective use of the allotted time for the debate. Organize your ideas in advance, prioritize the strongest arguments, and avoid digressing or losing focus during the discussion.

- a) Preparing in Advance: Adequately prepare arguments and supporting evidence before the debate.
- b) Organizing Ideas: Structure arguments logically to ensure coherence and clarity.
- c) Prioritizing Strong Arguments: Identify and prioritize the most compelling arguments for presentation.
- d) Avoiding Digressions: Stay focused on the topic and avoid irrelevant tangents.
- e) Rebuttal and Response Time: Strategically utilize rebuttal time to address opposing arguments.
- f) Practice and Time Awareness: Regularly practice debates to improve time management skills.

8. **Flexibility:** Be open to changing your opinion if the arguments presented during the debate are convincing and supported by solid evidence. Being willing to adapt and revise your viewpoints demonstrates an open and receptive attitude.

In particular, let's focus on the main social skills points of the three Manuals:

2.- DEBATE MANUAL FOR TUTORS

- **Interpersonal Skills:** Participating in team debates helps develop interpersonal skills. Debaters learn to work collaboratively, communicate effectively, listen actively, and build relationships within their team. They also learn to understand and respect the perspectives of others, even when they differ from their own.
- **Self-Criticism Ability:** Engaging in team debates promotes self-criticism skills. Debaters learn to recognize their mistakes collectively and accept feedback from the jury or audience. This process encourages self-improvement and enhances self-awareness.
- **Self-Confidence:** Being part of a debate team contributes to improving self-confidence. Debaters are exposed to challenges, learn to overcome their limits, and experience both victories and defeats. The support of their team members also plays a role in boosting their self-confidence.
- **Empathy:** Debaters often have to defend positions that may not align with their personal beliefs. This requires them to practice empathy by understanding and empathizing with differing viewpoints. They learn to put themselves in others' shoes and defend a stance they may not personally agree with, fostering empathy and understanding.



These social skills are developed through the collaborative and communicative nature of debates, where students engage in discussions, cooperate with others, and navigate diverse perspectives and opinions. By practicing these skills, debaters enhance their ability to interact effectively with others and contribute positively to group dynamics.

3.- DEBATE MANUAL FOR STUDENTS

- **Public Speaking:** The manual emphasizes the importance of developing effective public speaking skills. Public speaking is a valuable social skill as it enables individuals to express their thoughts and ideas confidently in front of others.
- **Communication:** Effective communication is a key social skill highlighted in the



manual. It covers various aspects such as verbal communication, non-verbal cues, voice modulation, and body language. Developing strong communication skills allows individuals to convey their messages clearly and engage with others effectively.

- **Debate and Discussion:** The manual focuses on debating essentials, including speech techniques and rebuttal strategies. These skills encourage individuals to engage in constructive debates and discussions, which are essential for effective communication, critical thinking, and understanding different perspectives.
- **Active Listening:** While not explicitly mentioned, active listening is an important social skill that complements effective communication. It involves giving full attention to the speaker, understanding their message, and responding appropriately. Active listening promotes better understanding, empathy, and meaningful interactions.
- **Emotional Intelligence:** Emotional intelligence, although not explicitly mentioned, is indirectly addressed in the manual. Skills such as managing stage fright, connecting emotionally with the audience, and evoking emotional appeal require individuals to be aware of their own emotions and those of others. Developing emotional intelligence helps in building rapport, understanding social dynamics, and responding empathetically.

- **Collaboration and Teamwork:** Although not explicitly mentioned, participating in debates and practice sessions implies the importance of collaboration and teamwork. Engaging in group discussions, mock debates, and providing feedback fosters teamwork, cooperation, and the ability to work collectively towards a common goal.

These social skills are crucial for personal, academic, and professional success, as they enhance interpersonal relationships, promote effective communication, and enable individuals to navigate social situations with confidence and competence.

4.- DEBATE MANUAL FOR JUDGES

- **Constructive Feedback:** The manual emphasizes that judges should provide constructive feedback to the debaters after the debate. Constructive feedback involves the ability to communicate effectively, offer suggestions for improvement, and maintain a respectful and supportive tone. These qualities contribute to effective social interaction and interpersonal skills.
- **Politeness:** Within the criteria category of "Style," the manual mentions politeness as an important aspect to consider when judging debates. Politeness entails being respectful, considerate, and displaying good manners towards others. It reflects social awareness and the ability to navigate social interactions with tact and diplomacy.
- **Teamwork:** The manual highlights the significance of teamwork in a debate. It suggests that team members should work together, divide arguments appropriately, and engage in quiet conferencing without distracting others. These aspects promote collaboration, cooperation, and effective communication within a team, which are essential social skills.



- **Points of Information (PoI):** The manual discusses the use of Points of Information (PoI) during a debate. PoIs involve interjecting with relevant points or questions while another speaker has the floor. Utilizing PoIs effectively requires active listening, concise communication, and the ability to engage in spontaneous interactions. These skills contribute to effective social communication and the exchange of ideas.

While the Manual for Judges primarily focuses on the technical aspects of judging debates, the aforementioned points indirectly touch upon social skills such as effective communication, active listening, teamwork, and politeness, which are valuable in various social contexts.