

## **ENTRY B – PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE PROJECT**

In the first five weeks of this unit, we have discovered, analyzed and implemented a number of persuasive techniques and fallacies used in formal speeches and the media. The time has come to relate this knowledge to an activity that has been practiced for close to three thousand years: the formal debate.

In the next four weeks, we will research, study, and prepare for a 33-minute Public Forum debate using the judging criteria outlined by the National Forensics League. You will work in teams of two (2), and will compete directly with one other team from this class. To successfully navigate your way through this challenging assignment, you must demonstrate serious preparation, a deep awareness of logic and logical fallacies, as well as the ability to think on your feet.

### **THE PROCESS**

#### **1. Research**

It is impossible to participate in a meaningful conversation about anything without knowing about both sides of an issue. Because you will not know what side of the topic you will defend until one minute before the beginning of the debate, you must know both sides of the subject equally well. We will spend the first phase of this project in the media center gathering and organizing knowledge in order to prepare a solid foundation for the debate.

#### **2. Preparation of Formal Introductions**

Both you and your teammate will have four minutes each to formally introduce, define, and analyze a logical argument with evidentiary support. You and your partner must divide the information into two (2) unique yet interdependent speeches that will provide the jury with a strong persuasive case in support of your position. In the second phase of this project, you and your teammate will plan and outline the presentation of these formal introductions.

#### **3. Preparation of Summary and Final Focus**

The Summary and Final Focus sections of the Public Forum debate integrate the main ideas from the Formal Introductions with key points from the Cross-Fire sessions. Although the Summary and Final Focus sessions are restricted by a short time frame, they represent the final opportunity to influence the jury panel and are therefore extremely important. In this phase, you will refine the strategies that will allow you to finish your case on a resounding note!

#### **4. Cross-Fire Strategies**

Perhaps the most difficult part of this assignment is the Cross-Fires. Prepared scripts are prohibited during these sessions as you and your partner will interact directly with your opponents in a logical debate of ideas and concepts. The jury will pay particular attention to the way in which you handle yourself during the Cross-Fires, so the final phase of this assignment will provide you with the necessary skills and practice time to prepare.

While you will hone a number of important skills throughout the course of this project, no one trait will reward you more than preparation. While natural intelligence is essential in a public forum debate, it will not overcome an informed, organized and practiced opponent. Please remember that this assignment is both challenging and sophisticated; you must maintain your focus and motivation throughout each phase of this pursuit. And if this reminder isn't incentive enough, remember this: your performance will be captured on tape.

*Preview the sample debate and carefully read the instructional and diagnostic rubrics before you begin.*