

INTRODUCTION TO LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE

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Course Description

This is the introductory course which allows students to participate in competitive Lincoln-Douglas debate. The focus is on developing thinking skills, philosophical reasoning and oral argumentation. Students work individually and in groups to figure out issues, and to develop quality cases, and they do in-class speaking drills and practice debates. They have TAs and varsity mentors. LDers use the NSDA topics, which change every two months. Prerequisite: 9th/10th grade.

Note: All parents are encouraged to join BOLD, the active parents organization, and to assist the team in fundraising and by judging.

Course Units, Goals, and/or Essential Questions

- Unit 1 will examine the NEW MA ONLY Novice topic: **Resolved: In a democracy, voting ought to be compulsory.**
- Units 2-4 are built around the second through fourth NSDA Topics.
- Those topics will be announced throughout the school year.
- Unit 5 will focus on Advanced LD, for students continuing into the Varsity class, **or** on an introduction to other varsity debate disciplines if there are students who are planning to switch events.
- Unit 6 will explore some other type of debate, typically Student Congress, World Schools or Big Questions.
- As a result of their participation in the course, all students should improve their confidence and skill when speaking in public, their ability to do quality research and their ability to organize facts and expert opinions into persuasive written and spoken arguments.

Classroom Experience

Debate classes are meant to be interactive. Students do research, construct arguments, engage in group discussions, participate in debates and deliver practice speeches. Since students regularly evaluate one another, teaching

everyone how to deliver appropriate feedback to their peers, and how to receive that feedback, is critical to the classroom experience.

Materials

Two Different Colored Pens/Paper to Flow on During Debates/Timer/ Headset/Wifi Connection/Chromebook (Advanced LDers might want to use personal laptops, but Chromebooks are fine during the Novice year)

Homework

Some research, case and block writing must be done at home, along with preparation for practice debates and tournaments. There are no officially designated "Homework Assignments." Instead, homework is linked to the completion of work begun in class, forms for tournament attendance, or to work for upcoming debates.

Assessments and Grades

All assignments are given point values and quarter grades are calculated based on the percentage of total points earned. Although the assignments are grouped into different categories on Aspen (e.g. Written Work/Speaking Activities/Evaluations) those categories are not weighted. Since writing a case or participating in a debate are the ultimate tests of mastery of the skills of debate, we have relatively few tests/quizzes. All Novices are expected to participate in a minimum of **two** tournaments outside of Lexington per year, **in addition to** participating in **the two Lexington hosted tournaments** (11/23/2024 and 1/18-20/2025 this school year). The final exam grades are based on the number of tournaments each student actively participates at.

Extra-Help/ Support Available

I am available after school most days of the week when I am not in a required (Monday) meeting or at a debate tournament. I am also available to help students at debate tournaments, by email, on Slack or in the Zoom Zone. We have TAs in the Beginning class whose job it is to mentor and support Beginning students and assign other varsity mentors to each novice.

Teacher Information

This is my eleventh year in Lexington and my 43rd as a teacher and debate coach. I have previously taught numerous Social Studies and English classes

and am a member of the board of several state/national speech and debate organizations.

Additional Information

All students are expected to follow classroom and tournament rules and to contribute to a positive team and classroom climate. Classroom discussions about the Lexington Public Schools Core Values and how they apply to both our classroom and team environment have taken and will continue to take place. Students are not permitted to work with private coaches, or in external evidence collectives.