**Preparing for Impromptu Debates**

**1. Individual Brainstorming:** So good ideas don’t get killed off by peer pressure. Think of how to define concepts, what values are involved, what you can say, and who your audience is. (Use at least 5 minutes).

**2. Collective Brainstorming:** Put your ideas together with your group. Together you should consider:

A. Definitions and examples that support them.

B. Values and morals: These are unifying points. What values are at stake?

C. Stakeholders: Who are the people who have an interest or something at risk in this debate?

D. Consider arguments and counterarguments

This is where you amass data; this becomes your knowledge base. You may want to think in terms of making your arguments REAL (Use Reason, Evidence, Analysis, and create a Link to either affirming or refuting the proposition. The example I have gave in class was the student who ended the point by saying, “and that’s why we believe X.”)

**3. Decision Time:** What case are you going to run? (Which arguments are you going to select as the most important to focus on?) Who is going to debate? In what order?

The next two steps happen simultaneously.

**4. Prepare the argument**: Split your team into groups, those who are going to speak and those who are going to listen, write, and help prepare the speakers. It is very important to listen and keep focused so that all members can help prepare the rebuttal speaker. Watch for consistency. Make sure your speakers don’t undermine or contradict each other’s proposals; that is like punching yourself in the face!

**5. Put all this together:** As you check for consistency, you may need to change one of your arguments and you can replace it with a better one from the brainstorming phase if needed, especially if you realize your major points contradict each other.

**6. Moderator guides discussion, moving people from step to step.**

**Remember that debate is formal, so there is no talking during the debate. To communicate with your team, have paper and pencil ready to record what the opposition says and then your rebuttal speaker can respond to those claims.**