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The following lesson plan is the result of the joined effort of an international team of trainers. Their focus is to improve quality of debate training. Therefore, an important part of this endeavour is the feedback users provide.

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## Lesson plan – Types of Arguments

### A. Goal of the lesson

During this lesson students are going to get familiarized with the concept of an ‘argument’, what characteristics it had and types of arguments. Moreover, these lessons will serve as an introduction to structuring (or ‘building’) an argument following its basic elements.

### B. Activities

#### Discussion (10-15 min)

Introduce debaters to the concept of ‘brainstorming’. For the process to be easier, you need not give a specific debate motion, but rather something everyday and relatable (depending on the age, you can give something along the lines of ‘annual psychological evaluation of teachers “or ‘lowering of legal drinking age”’) that the group will give pro and con reasons.

From here you can continue to explain that arguments are basically reasons for something, but with a specific structure and logical explanation. Plus, you can guide the students in the process of brainstorming, explaining how they could start developing arguments in the future.

#### Lecture (30 min)

Follow the main points below:

- What are arguments, and how do we use them in a debate?

Make sure to make clear that the argument is not the whole debate or a case, but rather a specific point (or a set of similar points) supporting one side of the motion. In the basic sense, arguments are just claims that are constructed using logic and evidence. For a comprehensive view of arguments see [Debating by Simon Quinn](#). (page 66- 86)

We use arguments to argue i.e to explain our side of the motion and why its importance outweighs the opposite side. Be advised, to prove you side as more relevant and valuable you need to set an existing framework and a assumptions under which you will create



your arguments. Following this, it is clear that your students need to understand motion definitions, framework and basics of interpretation.

- How can we construct an argument?

Start with the basic structure of an argument in [Quinn](#) (page 67-69) and continue with [The practical guide to debating- Neil Harvey Smith](#) (page 42-57). There is a plenty of theory on this topic, be sure to read as much as possible!

- What are the different types of arguments?
  - Principles
  - Policy
  - Practicalities
  - Consequences

(For an explanation for all, see [The practical guide to Debating](#), page 34-42).

### Exercise (20 min)

1. Divide the class in groups of 4 persons. Provide each team with a motion and 10 minutes to prepare arguments. Two persons will compose the proposition and the other two an opposition. The persons composing a team should work together but present one argument per person.

Have them speak for 2 minutes developing just that argument using the technique from the lecture.

Give them feedback.

2. If you students are beginners you can play ‘finish the argument’. You give the motion and the first argument, and then continue with picking out student which can start the explanation. After stating a point, the student then picks another one from the group to continue. When the argument is fully explained, pick another student to give another statement and repeat the whole explanation process.

#### A list of motions you can use:

All European countries should enforce affirmative action for the employment of the Roma

THW ban all religious holidays as national holidays

THW have a European passport.

THW require migrants wishing to have European citizenship to pass language and value tests

THW follow the Swedish model for integration.

This House supports inter – culture marriages.

This House believes integration policies in EU failed

## C. Preparation

Make sure to read:

[The practical guide to debating, Worlds style/ British Parliamentary Style 2011, Neill Harvey – Smith, IDEBATE press.](#)

Chapters that might be of specific interest for this lesson plan:

- How to Debate
- Arguments
- Types of arguments
- Making arguments well

If you have time and energy, you can prepare a presentation. This lecture is quite complex, and a visual aid may be of a great assistance.

Prepare some flipcharts with the basic elements of an argument (statement, explanation, example) so you can use them in the exercise. As the students give their arguments during the lecture you can write under the previously written headlines (elements).

Some additional reading recommendations:

- a. Book title: Current issues and Enduring questions: a guide to critical thinking and argument, with readings 1999, Sylvian Barnet and Hugo Bedau.
- b. Book title: Argument and Audience: Presenting Debates in Public Settings, IDEA 2004, Kenneth T. Broda-Bahm, Daniela Kempf, William J. Driscoll
- i. Chapters that might be of specific interest for this lesson plan:
  - Section two: Reasoning with your audience
  - Section three: Presenting a public debate
- c. Book title: Influencing Through Argument Updated Edition, IDEA 2006, Robert Huber and Alfred C. Snider
- d. Book title: Art, Argument and Advocacy: Mastering Parliamentary Debate, John Meany and Kate Shuster, IDEA 2002
- e. Book title: Discovering the world through debate: a practical guide to Educational debate for debaters, coaches and judges, IDEA Press Books 2005.
  - Chapters that might be of specific interest for this lesson plan:
    - Chapter 2: The structure of an argument
    - Chapter 3: Claims and propositions
    - Chapter 4: Evidence
    - Chapter 5: Warrants
    - Chapter 6: Quality of arguments

5. Video lectures (you can possibly play some parts of the full lectures)

- [Video/Transcript: Debate argumentation](#)
- [The Toulmin Method of Argumentation](#)

- [Monash association of debaters guide to debating: Tips, Tactics and First Principles](#)

## D. Hints

The lecture on types of arguments is very important for debaters, so the lecturer should make sure that everyone is on board with the material and if needed extend the time for practical work. In addition, depending on the level of the debaters, the lecture can focus more in depth on the different types of arguments, and the mechanics behind them, or on another element needed for the group.

## E. Verification

After this segment students should be able to:

- understand what arguments are
- create an argument
- review different types of arguments

This could be fully examined during a mock debate but be advised that good arguments could not be made only with a knowledge of how to make argument. The students also need to interpret the motion and analyze it in order for good arguments to come up on a debate.

Additionally, you can talk with the students about the purpose and importance of the different elements of the argument. Ask the following questions:

- Why a clear structure is needed when presenting an argument?
- What is the importance of the evidence?
- Are there any more/less important elements of an argument?
- What are logical connections?

If the students are struggling with answering any of the question, focus your future feedback on that specific topics.