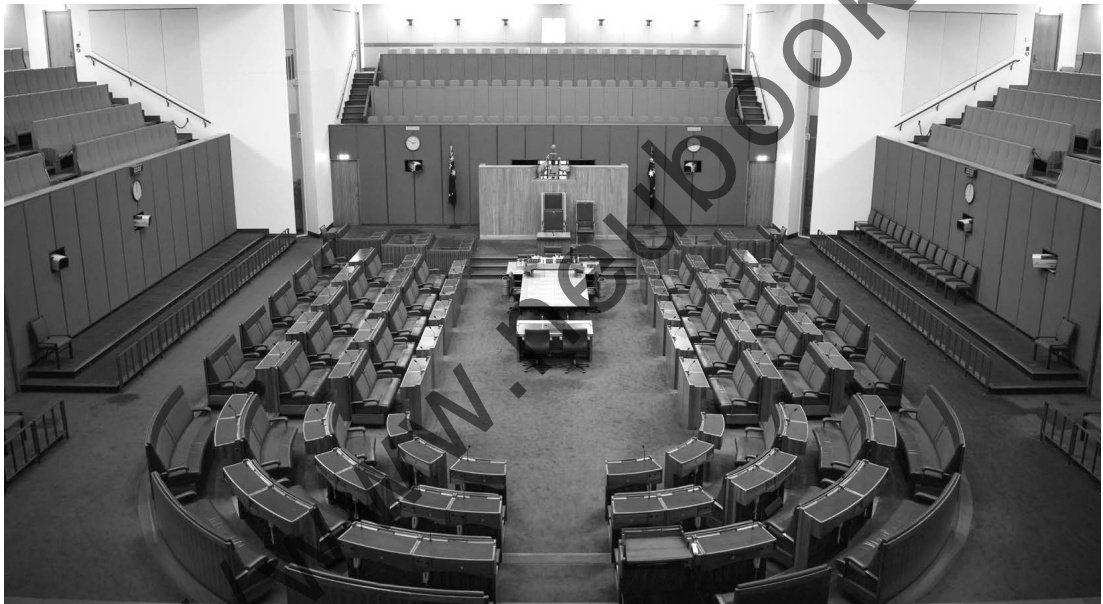


Unit 1

Debate Introduction



Unit Overview

How do you understand debate? Have you ever been a member of an English debating team? Debate is the formal contest of argumentation between two teams or individuals. It is not a mere verbal or performance skill, but embodies the ideals of a reasoned argument, tolerance for divergent points of view, and rigorous self-examination. In this chapter, you will learn the format of the British Parliamentary Debate, responsibilities for speakers in it, and learn how to chair a British Parliamentary Debate.

Focuses and Difficulties

Focuses:

- Be able to understand the format and rules of the British Parliamentary Debate.
- Be able to understand what a POI is.
- Be able to apply the related terms and expressions in British Parliamentary Debate.

Difficulties:

- Be able to understand and identify the roles for speakers in a British Parliamentary Debate.
- Be able to grasp the whole process of British Parliamentary Debate.

Pre-class Tasks

Task One: Video-watching

Watch the video of *The Introduction to the British Parliamentary Debate* and fill in the blanks according to the video.

- There are _____ sides in a British Parliamentary Debate, which are _____ side and _____ side. Each side has _____ teams and _____ members.
- The names of teams are _____, _____, _____, and _____.
- There are _____ speakers in the British Parliamentary Debate and they are _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____ in speaking order.
- The speech of each speaker last no longer than _____ minutes with the bell rung once in the _____ and _____ minute and twice at _____ minute.
- The full name of POI is _____, which can be raised from the _____ and _____ minute.
- What are the responsibilities of Opening Government Team and the Opening Opposition Team in a British Parliamentary debate?

- What are the responsibilities of Closing Teams in a British Parliamentary debate?

- The ranking of the debate is based on _____ and _____ to the debate.

Task Two: Vocabulary Building

The following terms, words, expressions or proper names are frequently

used in the British Parliamentary Debate. Please search the meanings of them and share your results with your classmates. Make sure you get the correct meanings of them in the debating context.

British Parliamentary Debate	the Government	political opponents
the House of Commons	the Opposition	spontaneous arguments
the House of Lords	motion	legislative body
Appointments Commission	adjudicator	the grace period
self-analysis	Point of Information(POI)	case
cross questioning	Prime Minister (PM)	stance
rhetoric	Leader of Opposition (PM)	refute
Government Whip (GW)	Deputy Prime Minister (DPM)	argument
Opposition Whip (OW)	Deputy Leader of pposition(DLO)	extension
electorate	Member of Government (MG)	fold
penalize	Member of Opposition (MO)	repeal laws

In-class Tasks

Part One: Knowledge Input

Read the following passage and do the tasks below.

British Parliamentary Debate

The history of debate can date back to ancient Greece, where debating was often a part of democracy. In Athens, Greek citizens met to debate the actions of their government. In the 5th Century B.C., Socrates Socrates' student Plato, and Plato's student, Aristotle are all famous debaters in Greece.

Socrates, taught the value of self-analysis through a method of cross questioning because he believes that when an idea, policy, solution, argument or method is challenged, both the strengths and weaknesses become clearer. This also holds in a debate. Identifying the holes in an argument, the argument becomes clearer.

By the Middle Ages, education in Europe included training in public speaking and debate, which are often called rhetoric. Early in the history of the United States, there were debating societies at universities. While debating between political opponents was and is a common occurrence in democratic countries and today political debates during election campaigns are now quite normal.

Today, debate has become popular in high schools and universities around the world. Most European countries have debating programs. Recently, debating has flourished in East Asia. Now, debate is expanding to Eastern and Central Europe and to other areas.

As for the format of a debate, there are spontaneous arguments, Lincoln-Douglas debates, policy debates, and parliamentary debates. The British Parliamentary Debate (BP Debate) is the format used for the World Universities Debating Championship. Since 2010, it has been used as an official style of the FLTRP Cup National English Debating Competition. In this textbook, this is the format we will learn.

British Parliamentary Debate originates from the debate in the British Parliament. A parliament is a legislative body consisting of people who have the power to make, amend and repeal laws. In the British Parliament, it includes the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The members of the House of Commons are chosen by the electorate, and the members of the House of Lords are mostly appointed by the Queen on the recommendation of the Prime Minister or of the House of Lords Appointments Commission.

The Government is formed by the party that wins most seats in the House of Commons in a general election and the leader of the Party usually becomes the Prime Minister. The opposition will be the largest minority Party.

In this textbook, the British Parliamentary Debating Style is adopted because its format is the most popular for educational debates in the world. You, as students, can practice your argumentative skills, public speaking skills and critical thinking by using this format of debate.

In British Parliamentary debate, there are four teams, and each team consists of two speakers. Two teams are on the either side of the case, with two teams called the Government and the other ones called the Opposition. The two Government teams are expected to support the motion while the Opposition teams are expected to oppose the motion no matter what the motion is. The two teams are on the same side are also competitive, because at the end of the debate the adjudicator will rank each team from the best to the worst. So, when the two Government teams are competing with the two Opposition teams, the two teams on the same side are competing with each other as well.

The basic format and time limits for each speaker are as follows:

Table 1 British Parliamentary Debate Format

Speakers	Teams	Time
Prime Minister (PM), 1st Speaker for the 1st Government	First Government Team	7 minutes
Leader of Opposition (LO), 1st Speaker for the 1st Opposition	First Opposition Team	7 minutes
Deputy Prime Minister (DPM), 2nd Speaker for the 1st Government	First Government Team	7 minutes
Deputy Leader of Opposition (DLO), 2nd Speaker for the 1st Opposition	First Opposition Team	7 minutes
Member of the Government (MG), 1st Speaker for the 2nd Government	Second Government Team	7 minutes
Member of the Opposition (MO), 1st Speaker for the 2nd Opposition	Second Opposition Team	7 minutes
Government Whip (GW), 2nd Speaker for the 2nd Government	Second Government Team	7 minutes
Opposition Whip (OW), 2nd Speaker for the 2nd Opposition	Second Opposition Team	7 minutes

As can be seen from the table above, the First Government and Opposition Team, which are generally responsible for the first half of the debate, delivered the first four speeches and then the second Government team and the second Opposition teams, which are generally responsible for the second half of the debate, delivered the last four speeches.

The rotation for the speakers of the British Parliamentary Debate Format is shown in the table below for you to clearly know the turn of their speech.

Table 2 Rotation for the Speakers of the British Parliamentary Debate Format

Teams	Speakers	Roles		Speakers	Teams
First Government Team	1st speaker	Prime Minister	Leader of Opposition	2nd speaker	First Opposition Team
	3rd speaker	Deputy Prime Minister	Deputy Leader of Opposition	4th speaker	
Second Government Team	5th speaker	Member of the Government	Member of the Opposition	6th speaker	Second Opposition Team
	7th speaker	Government Whip	Opposition Whip	8th speaker	

Each speech of the eight roles will last 7 minutes and it starts to time when the speaker starts to speak and all speakers will be timed during the debating. When the speaker has spoken for 1 minute, there will be a single ring of a bell, and then the Point of Information (POI) will be allowed. Points of Information are impromptu questions raised by opposing teams, which last only 15 seconds. Points of Information may only be given to speakers on the other side. So, if you are on the First Opposition Team, you can only ask POIs to the First Government and Second Government but not to the Second Opposition Team. POIs have a number of purposes, such as asking for clarification, pointing out a contradiction in the opposing team's argument, responding to an argument made by the opposing team, pointing out a fact missed or misstated by the other team, previewing an upcoming speech, and injecting some humor into the round. Debaters are allowed to offer a POI after the first minute and before the 6th minute. The first and last minute of the speech are protected from being interrupted. At the 6th minute during each speaker's speech, a single ring will be sounded, and the POIs will not be allowed. There will be a double ring of a bell at the seventh minute. At the 7 minutes 15 seconds, a continuous ringing signals the conclusion of the grace period. In British Parliamentary style, speakers are not penalized for exceeding the time limit. However, by about 7'20"—7'30" the adjudicators will simply stop listening. If you go over 7'30", the adjudicators will probably throw something at you.

The responsibilities of each speaker are listed below:

Speakers	Responsibilities
Prime Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Defines and interprets the motion. ◇ Describes the approach the First Government Team will take. ◇ Constructs the case for that interpretation of the motion.
Leader of Opposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Establishes a stance that both Opposition Teams will defend throughout the debate. ◇ Refutes the case offered by the Prime Minister. ◇ Constructs one or more arguments against the motion as the Prime Minister interpreted it.

Speakers	Responsibilities
Deputy Prime Minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Refutes the arguments presented by the Leader of Opposition. ✧ Rebuilds the case presented by the Prime Minister. ✧ Constructs one or more new arguments supporting the case of the Prime Minister.
Deputy Leader of Opposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Continues refutation of case presented by the Prime Minister. ✧ Refutes any new arguments presented by the Deputy Prime Minister. ✧ Rebuilds arguments of the Leader of Opposition. ✧ Constructs one or more new arguments supporting those presented by the Leader of Opposition.
Member of Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Supports the general direction and case of the First Government Team. ✧ Briefly continues refutation of First Opposition Team's arguments. ✧ Refutes new arguments introduced by the Deputy Leader of Opposition. ✧ Constructs at least one new argument that is different from but consistent with the case of the 1st Government (sometimes called an extension).
Member of Opposition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Supports the general direction taken by the First Opposition Team. ✧ Briefly continues refutation of the case of the First Government Team. ✧ Refutes arguments introduced by the Member of Government. ✧ Constructs at least one new argument (extension) that is different from but consistent with the case of the 1st Opposition.
Government Whip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✧ Refutes the extension offered by the Member of Opposition. Sometimes this refutation can be folded into the overall summary of the debate. ✧ Summarizes the entire debate from the point of view of the Government, defending the general viewpoint of both Government Teams, with a special eye toward the case of the Second Government Team. This overall summary may include a defense of the Member of Government's extension. ✧ Usually does not provide new arguments.

Speakers	Responsibilities
Opposition Whip	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◇ Refutes the extension offered by the Member of Government. Sometimes this refutation can be folded into the overall summary of the debate. ◇ Summarizes the entire debate from the point of view of the Opposition, defending the general viewpoint of both Opposition Teams with a special eye toward the case of the Second opposition. This overall summary may include a defense of the Member of Opposition's extension. ◇ Does not provide new arguments.

Task One: Put the following title into correct order according to the order of their speeches. Please write the letters before each term on the right chart according to the correct order.

A. Government Whip	(1) _____
B. Leader of Opposition	(2) _____
C. Prime Minister	(3) _____
D. Member of the Opposition	(4) _____
E. Deputy Leader of Opposition	(5) _____
F. Member of the Government	(6) _____
G. Opposition Whip	(7) _____
H. Deputy Prime Minister	(7) _____

Task Two: After reading the passage, please fill in the following blanks.

- The time limit for the speech of each speaker is (1) _____.
- One of the most important and dynamic parts of the debate is (2) _____. It can be offered after (3) _____ of a speech and before (4) _____ of the speech. If the request for it is accepted, the person who has requested the point has a maximum of (5) _____ to make the point.
- Four formats of the debates which are mentioned in this part are (6) _____, (7) _____, (8) _____, and (9) _____.

Task Three: Please write the roles of each speaker for a BP Debate with some key words.

Speakers	Speakers' Responsibilities
Prime Minister	
Leader of Opposition	
Deputy Prime Minister	
Deputy Leader of Opposition	
Member of Government	
Member of Opposition	
Government Whip	
Opposition Whip	

Part Two: Sentence Patterns for Chairing a British Parliamentary Debate

The following are the frequently used sentence patterns when the chairman chairs a BP Debate. The job of the chairman or chair is chairing the debate, introducing each speaker and keeping order if necessary. He/She also directs discussion in the adjudication, and casts vote if a vote is required between two teams and there is a tie on the panel. Once the result (known as the “call”) is decided, the chair will tell the teams (who are let back into the room) the call, and give a comparative justification for the call that was agreed on.

Chairman:

1. Welcoming the Audience:

- ✧ Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to today’s debate.
- ✧ Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the Grand Final of ...

2. Introducing the Debaters:

- ✧ Representing the Opening Proposition/Government is ...
- ✧ The Opening Proposition/Government is represented by ...
- ✧ Speaking as Prime Minister is ... and speaking as Deputy Prime Minister is ...

3. Introducing the Motion and Others:

- ✧ The motion of the debate is ... I would now like to call this House to order and invite Prime Minister to the floor to open the debate.
- ✧ I thank Prime Minister for the opening the debate and now open the floor to Leader of Opposition for a constructive speech in opposition to the motion
- ✧ To continue the case on behalf of the Opening Government/ Opposition
- ✧ To continue the Government’s/Opposition’s line of argument

Task: Drills for the Sentence Patterns

Please imitate the sentence patterns and make an audio of those sentence patterns.

After-class Tasks

Task One: Do More Reading on the British Parliamentary Debate. Download the reading materials from the website of the course resources.

Step One: Read and Take Notes

Read articles entitled *How to Debate (British Parliament Style)* and *British Parliamentary Debating for Beginners* and write down the key information on your notebook.

Step Two: Discuss and Answer Questions

Discuss the content of the articles with one of your classmates and then ask questions about this article to make sure that both of you have understood this article completely.

Task Two: Vocabulary Quiz

Please write down the Chinese meanings of the following terms in a BP Debate.

No.	Terms	Chinese Meanings
1	the Government/Proposition	
2	the Opposition	
3	Prime Minister	
4	Deputy Prime Minister	
5	Leader of Opposition	
6	Deputy Leader of Opposition	
7	Whip	
8	POI	
9	motion	
10	adjudicator	

Task Three: Debate Project

Step One: Form a group of four and choose the government or opposition team as your own team and assign the role for each member of your team.

Step Two: Summarize the main responsibilities of the four speakers of

your team and practice orally until you can deliver it fluently without referring to notes.

Step Three: Make a video of introducing the main responsibilities of each speaker in your team. Make sure each member acts as a speaker in your team.

<http://www.neubooks.cc>