

Is the Complex Sentence Really Complex? Debate: Informative

In this assignment, students will debate the resolution, “Complex sentences are complex.” In a debate, the resolution clearly states a position. Then, two teams face each other to present arguments that affirm or negate the resolution. The affirmative team presents arguments to prove that the resolution is true. The negative team presents arguments to disprove the resolution. Each team also attempts to find fault with evidence presented by the other team. A winning debate team will have strong arguments in its favor and will show that its opponent’s arguments are weak or invalid.

Students break up into affirmative and negative teams, or an individual student can select a side to defend. After determining whether they are affirmative or negative, students begin analysis and gather evidence. An important place to start is by comparing the meanings of the word, complex, with the definition of a complex sentence.

COMPLEX

1. Composite —Made up of various interconnected parts
2. Difficult—Characterized by a complicated arrangement of parts that is hard to understand
3. Elaborate—Being intricate or involved
4. Main object + bound objects—Consisting of a main object with surrounding objects that are bound to it

COMPLEX SENTENCE

A sentence containing only one independent clause and at least one dependent clauses.

Next, students develop arguments with reasoning and evidence to prove their case. Two examples are given below. For evidence, students can use the definitions themselves, examples of complex sentences (written by themselves or famous authors), comparisons with the definition of simple sentences, and quotes from writers and scholars about writing complex sentences.

Affirmative argument—A complex sentence is complex because it is composite.

Reasoning—*explain why complex sentences are composite*

Evidence—*the definition itself*

Negative argument—A complex sentence is not complex because it is not always difficult.

Reasoning—*explain why complex sentences are not always difficult*

Evidence—*examples of easy to understand complex sentences, or comparison to simple sentences that are difficult*

Last, students consider what the opposing team’s strongest arguments might be and prepare rebuttals for them.

After the debate is presented (or at the conclusion of the research), students write a summary of the debate. The summary should recap the affirmative team’s arguments, the negative team’s arguments, and each team’s rebuttals. One possible organization for the summary is given below.

Background – state the resolution and describe the circumstances of the debate (date, place, teams, winner)

Affirmative

Summarize the arguments and evidence put forward by the affirmative team

Negative

Summarize the arguments and evidence put forward by the negative team

Rebuttals

Summarize the effective rebuttals made by each team