Students are put into groups of three to five and the whole class is given a claim. The student groups must then provide a piece of supporting evidence and reasoning from a given text or set of documents, math formulas, etc. The groups have a short amount of time allotted to find what they believe is the best possible piece of supporting evidence and reasoning. This time can be as short as two or three minutes, or longer for more involved claims or an argument that they must defend along with a counterargument.

After time is called, one representative must stand and deliver the findings of each group. Briefly, the class discusses which evidence and reasoning they found strongest and why. Students vote for the best argument (they cannot vote for their own group), and the teacher then tallies the votes and announces the winner. The process repeats as many times as desired with new claims.

In a variation on the scoring, after the students vote, the teacher announces his/her vote for strongest argument and shares why, and that group receives bonus points for earning the teacher’s vote. Finally, the teacher may give a point to each group that voted for the same argument as the teacher, crediting them for recognizing a strong argument.

Similarly, this process can be used to come up with the best questions to ask about a claim or argument in Skill 4 or to determine which is the best counterargument or response to a counterargument is Skill 5. This activity places everyone in the class on the same side of an argument but then has them compete in groups to see who can defend that argument most convincingly. It thus combines what is best about both competition and cooperation.

Another version of the Class Challenge allow for additional friendly competition and thoughtful discussion. The first is the activity presented without the “game” aspect so there is no evaluating of responses for the “best”. It is a way for collaboratively brainstorming multiple perspectives on a claim or topic.

As with other EBA activities, the oral and written aspects of this one can strengthen and inform one another in more than one way. The Class Challenge could act as an introduction to an essay assignment in which students must anticipate and refute a counterargument to their thesis on a text. Alternatively, students could first draft such an essay, and then perform the Challenge to compare their handiwork with that of their peers, and finally revise the essays to reflect the feedback they received during the Challenge.

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| **Step** | **Teacher Move** | **Student Move** |
| **1** | Lead a discussion in which the class generates a claim to be defended OR provide a claim to be defended. |  |
| **2** | Divide the class into groups of 3–5 students. |  |
| **3** | Set a timer for three minutes. While it runs, monitor students to make sure they are on task. | Take three minutes to draft a one-minute speech stating the evidence and reasoning you found in support of the claim. Select a representative who will deliver your speech. |
| **4** | Set a timer for one minute. While it runs, have one group’s representative... | Take one minute to deliver your speech while the rest of the class listens. |
| **5** | Repeat step 4 until all groups have shared. | Repeat step 4 until all groups have shared. |
| **6** | Lead a discussion in which students... | Discuss which group’s speech was the strongest and why. |
| **7** | Facilitate a vote for which was the most convincing | Vote on which was the most convincing (you can’t vote for your own!) |
| **7** | Share own vote for most convincing. Award 3 points to the group that earned teacher vote, and 1 point to each group that voted the same as the teacher. |  |
| **8** | Repeat steps 2–7 as desired. | Repeat steps 2-7 as required. |