Formal debates lasting an entire class period can be the most exciting part of EBA. The entire class is involved in debating the same complex question or topic, with teams of students being assigned to defend different perspectives. Within each group, every student has a distinct role: one delivers the opening statement, one asks cross-examination questions, another answers questions posed by other groups, and yet another delivers the closing statement. Each group is responsible both for defending its own perspective and for effectively critiquing the arguments made by other teams.

In preparation for the debate, teams work together to identify multiple pieces of evidence and reasoning to support their assigned perspective. Once this has been gathered, teams weigh the evidence and prepare an introduction statement, as well as questions for the opposing teams, and responses to possible questions or counterarguments they anticipate from the other teams. Students assign roles for who is presenting what in the debate and they practice to make sure that things will go smoothly.

Students work together feverishly, sometimes for days at a time, to research and perfect their arguments. They prepare lists of cross-examination questions for their opponents and speculate about what questions they will have to answer. The debates can take numerous forms. They can be adapted to suit the size of a class, the length of a block, or the layout of a room. They can be graded with customized rubrics according to a teacher's priorities, so that one class might emphasize teamwork and listening skills while another focuses more on how well students understand the text or content being discussed. And they can appear at the beginning of new units to raise interest, at the end of units to review and assess what has been learned, or anywhere in between.

**Checklist for a Multi-Perspective Debate**

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| **Check** | **Tasks -To be completed in order!** |
|  | **Our group has 3 reasons (comprised of evidence and reasoning) that support our claim.** |
|  | **Our reasons (evidence + reasoning) are clearly numbered 1 through 3.** |
|  | **We double checked that our 3 reasons (evidence + reasoning), when taken together, address all of the requirements for the opening speech:**  |
|  | **We each have a role in the debate, no one is sharing a role (remember only the cross-examinee does not have prep time, everyone else will have time to discuss their speech with their group first).** |
|  | **Taglines (3-5 word summary) are prepared for each piece of evidence/reasoning.** |
|  | **Our teacher has checked our evidence and reasoning.** |
|  | **Bonus: We have cross-examination questions ready for the team we are assigned to.** |
|  | **Bonus: We have visual representations of our evidence and reasoning.** |