

## Debate Seminar Assignments

During the course of this year, students will complete three team policy debates on current events issues. Tutors may choose from the following suggested topics, OR they may choose their own topic based on the needs and interests of their particular class. Tutors may want to use a simpler topic for the first debates, to ease students into the process of debating.

### Death Penalty

Complexity: 1

This is a good starting topic because it has only two main positions: for and against. The main difficulty in this topic is finding reliable facts.

**Resources:** The Death Penalty Information Center [[www.deathpenaltyinfo.org](http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org)]; the Department of Justice [[www.doj.gov](http://www.doj.gov)].

**Resolution:** The United States should change its penal code to abolish the death penalty.

### Military Draft

Complexity: 1

This topic also has two main positions (for and against) but a lot of emotion on each side. Debaters should try to focus their arguments on facts rather than opinions.

**Resources:** The Center on Conscience & War [[www.centeronconscience.org](http://www.centeronconscience.org)]; the Selective Service Systems [[www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov)].

**Resolution:** The United States should reinstitute a mandatory military draft.

### Income Tax

Complexity: 2

This topic is slightly more complicated because there are a number of possible ways to fix the current policy.

**Resources:** The Tax and Accounting Sites Directory [[www.taxsites.com/policy](http://www.taxsites.com/policy)]; the Internal Revenue Service [[www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)].

**Resolution:** The United States' income tax policy should be significantly changed.

### Energy Policy

Complexity: 2

This topic is very popular right now. Although the harms are consistent, the topic is difficult because there are many proposals for change.

**Resources:** The Department of Energy [[www.energy.gov](http://www.energy.gov)]; the Federal Energy Commission [[www.energy-commission.org](http://www.energy-commission.org)].

**Resolution:** The United States' energy policy should be significantly changed in order to reduce dependence on foreign oil.

### Immigration Policy

Complexity: 3

This topic is complicated because there are many parts of the immigration policy that could be changed and many ways to change them. The tutor may wish to focus on one part of immigration policy (e.g., temporary work visas or the quota system).

**Resources:** The Heritage Foundation [[www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org)]; the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service [[www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)].

**Resolution:** The United States should significantly change its immigration policy.

### Election Reform

Complexity: 3

This topic is tricky because there are many problems with the status quo but an equal number of problems with any alternatives. Research may not be as readily available, but what there is should be more credible.

**Resources:** The Federal Register [[www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoralcollege](http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/electoralcollege)]; Fair Vote [[www.fair-vote.org](http://www.fair-vote.org)].

**Resolution:** The United States should significantly change its electoral process to eliminate the Electoral College.