**Urban Debate League Curriculum: October 2016 – Electoral College**



**Week 1 – Background and Debrief**

* Debrief of the tournament and how the weekend was (10-15 min)
* What we can improve on for future tournaments (5 min)
* Discussion time on the topic (25 min)
  + Some questions to get started
    - What is the electoral college?
    - What is the purpose of our elections and the electoral college?
    - What is the history behind the creation of the electoral college?
      * Was written in to the constitution when large states and small states came into conflict about their representation in Congress
    - How would our voting processes differ if we didn’t have the electoral college and we instead had a popular vote?
    - What are some examples of popular votes in your lives? Student government, team captains, etc.

**Week 2 – Framing**

* Framing Background! (20 min)
  + Ask the kids impact comparison questions like, what’s more valuable, life or money?
  + Challenge them to challenge absolutes – usually they’ll say life is more important which is the obvious answer
    - Ask if it’s possible to value human life in dollar terms.
    - Give examples of where it has been necessary to do so – life insurance, military action, etc.
    - Would the government pay an infinite sum of money to save one person’s life? No – is that justified?
  + Ask them to compare fundamental world views
    - Comparison between security and privacy (think NSA/Domestic surveillance)
    - Religious rights versus individual rights
  + Use those comparisons to lead into a discussion of framing
  + Tell them that there is a formal mechanism in debate to establish these types of “frameworks” or world views
  + If you argue the framework, the judge has to judge on your world view – becomes helpful when you have comparisons between two distinctly different impacts
* Framing generation on the topic (20 min)
  + Use this topic: This House Believes that the Electoral College harms American democracy.
  + The two frameworks that should come up should be based on the protection of minority rights (state’s rights usually) and the value of each person’s independent vote.
  + Have them come up with reasons why their framework is true – usually includes linking back to the operative words which in this case is “harms” and “American democracy”
* Argument generation (20 min)
  + Have them give their different frameworks
  + And have them argue against each other
    - They should be flowing as well

**Week 3 – Workshopping Skills**

* Flowing! (25 min)
  + Use the resolution above
  + Have the kids make a case for the Gov or Opp side with only 1-2 points. Give them 10 mins prep.
  + Have them speak, have people flow, and then pick a few students to give their Opp case and respond to the first case
  + This entire time, emphasize correct flowing technique – whatever works for you but I usually do two separate sheets of paper, one with the Gov and one with the Opp cases and have two colors of ink.
  + Look at their flows and see where they can improve!
* Enunciation (10 min)
  + Have the kids pull out a book, a worksheet, or something they can read off of.
  + Demonstrate for them how enunciation sounds while speaking
    - Be very deliberate in your words, overemphasize tongue and mouth movements
  + Have them each practice (can split off into groups or keep groups together, up to you)
* Fluency and flow drills – this flow means how well they can speak continuously
  + Ask them to prep an impromptu speech (1 min speech with 30 seconds prep time)
  + It can be on anything
  + Have them write a few notes but not enough for a full speech
  + And then have them give the 1 min speech
* Game (10 min)
  + Debate baseball, mine is bigger (this is a [link](https://docs.google.com/a/yale.edu/document/d/1MzMhLqind3zdE0E5n_8xuYiDQeYYgicVXrY4ZDhxacM/edit?usp=sharing) to more games if you want to see them)

**Week 4 – PRACTICE!**

* Have a practice round (two if possible running at the same time, or more if you have the ability)
* Use one of the following resolutions:
  + THBT, on balance, the Electoral College disenfranchises American citizens.
  + THW abolish the Electoral College.
  + THBT the Electoral College system harms the United States.