



زانكۆی سه لاحة دين - هه وليبر  
Salahaddin University-Erbil

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Academic Debate  
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*Welcome!*





## What is an Academic Debate?

Academic Debate is an argument or discussion expressing different opinions. It can develop research ability, critical thinking skills, and public speaking skill.

- Basically an academic debate consists of two teams affirmative and negative teams debating proposition. The teams address their speeches to an audience and judges. At the conclusion of the debate, the judges adjudicate the debate and declare a winner.
- In short academic debate is a rule governed affair that follows a regulate process of presenting logical arguments in the form of a competition.

Proposition: a statement or assertion that expresses an opinion.



**The four activities required in this course:**

**1-General Discussion, critical thinking and theoretical material.**

**2:Report Writing**

**3. Academic Poster**

**4. Academic debate and argumentation**



## **Students' Assessment:**

**First: Assessing general discussion, critical thinking (15%) and a quiz in theoretical material (5%).**

**Second: Assessment of academic writing (%20):**

**Report writing 10% + seminar/ public speaking 10%**

**Third: Poster (Academic Poster 20)**

**Fourth: Assessment of academic debate and argumentation (40%)**



## 1-General Discussion and critical thinking

General discussion is a two-way process of giving and receiving information through any number of channels. Whether one is speaking informally to a colleague, addressing a conference or meeting, writing a newsletter article or formal report, the following basic principles apply:

- Know your audience.
- Know your purpose.
- Know your topic.
- Anticipate objections.
- Present a rounded picture.
- Achieve credibility with your audience.
- Follow through on what you say.
- Communicate a little at a time.
- Present information in several ways.
- Develop a practical, useful way to get feedback.
- Use multiple communication techniques.



Discussion is complex. When listening to or reading someone else's message, we often filter what's being said through a screen of our own opinions. One of the major barriers to communication is our own ideas and opinions.

### **People remember:**

- 10% of what they read
- 20% of what they hear
- 30% of what they see
- 40% of what they hear and see



## Critical Thinking

The ability to understand, evaluate and reach a conclusion about issues in accordance with certain criteria by means of observing, raising questions, comparing, checking arguments and logical reasoning.





## Steps of Critical Thinking

In order to train the students on critical thinking skill, they should be introduced to the following steps:

1. Collecting data relevant to your topic.
2. Demonstrating differing viewpoints.
3. Discussing and checking the viewpoints to make sure they are valid.
4. Separating effective and weak aspects of the viewpoints.
5. Evaluating the viewpoints subjectively.



## Characteristics of Critical Thinking:

A person possessing critical thinking ability has a number of characteristics. A person with this ability does not offer opinion on every topic; they do not talk about an issue about which they do not have sufficient information.

- They know when they need more information about a specific topic.
- They know conclusions can be correct or erroneous.
- They know that people have different understanding of a certain issue.
- They raise questions and investigate when issues are vague.
- They can tell the difference between emotional and logical thinking.
- They resort to reliable sources and refer to them.
- They care about every aspect of the topic equally.
- They do not deviate from the main idea of the topic.
- When there is a necessary argument they will have a response.



## Facts

- something which can be proven. It expresses a truth that is reached by consensus which can be found out through observation possessing undisputable of details. A fact is true no matter what
- e.g. 9 is bigger numeral than 8, or words can be nouns or verbs.

## Opinions

- The expression of one's viewpoints, understanding, ideology or feelings. An opinion can be agreed or disagreed to. An opinion is not always true and cannot be proven.
- e.g. Accountancy is a better and most suitable area than media or *Audit* is an easier subject than *Principles of Finance*.



# Fact or Opinion

A fact can be proven through research and observation, while an opinion expresses someone's beliefs and feelings.

Statement	Type	Reason
Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone <u>in 1876</u> .	<b>Fact</b>	Reference to a specific time and person in history
It <u>seems</u> like the weather will be much cooler next week.	<b>Opinion</b>	Prediction that has yet to come true
I <u>think</u> this week's math test is going to be very difficult.	<b>Opinion</b>	Personal judgment about a specific subject
Earth is <u>the third planet</u> from the sun.	<b>Fact</b>	Reference to scientific data

## Ask yourself...

- ▶ Can the information be checked through research?
- ▶ Is the statement always true?
- ▶ Does the statement express a thought or feeling?
- ▶ Is the statement a prediction?

## Look for These Clues

### For Facts

time and dates  
historical events  
numbers and statistics  
scientific data  
names  
places  
references

### For Opinions

descriptive words  
feeling-based verbs

- believe
- think
- feel
- seem

best/worst  
always/never

The author may use facts, opinions, or a combination of both to influence how you think about a subject. Remember to look for clues to determine whether the statement is a fact or an opinion.



## What is a report?

A report is a concise piece of writing that uses facts and evidence to look at issues, situations, events or findings. Reports are informative texts that aim to analyze different topics with a specific purpose and audience in mind.



## Structure of Report

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Summary (Abstract)
- Introduction
- Body (main sections/ discussion/ methods)
- Results
- Conclusion
- References
- Appendices





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Salahaddin University-Erbil

Kurdistan Regional Government  
Ministry of Higher Education & Scientific Research  
Salahaddin University- Erbil  
College of Education/Shaqlawa  
English Department



Title

Supervised by

Prepared by



## **Structure of Report:**

The main features of a report are described below to provide a general guide.

- **Title Page**

This should briefly but explicitly describe the purpose of the report (if this is not obvious from the title of the work). Other details you may include could be your name, the date and for whom the report is written.





## Contents (Table of Contents)

The contents page should list the different chapters and/or headings together with the page numbers. Your contents page should be presented in such a way that the reader can quickly scan the list of headings and locate a particular part of the report. You may want to number chapter headings and subheadings in addition to providing page references. Whatever numbering system you use, be sure that it is clear and consistent throughout.



## Summary (Abstract)

- Every report should have an abstract. The abstract summarizes the report using between 100 and 200 words in a single paragraph. The purpose of an abstract is so that a reader can quickly get an idea of the main points and contributions of the paper. The author often writes the abstract last. This is because it is only *after* the body of the report is written that the writer gains a good perspective of the contents and results of the report.
- Note that the purpose of the abstract is *not* to provide an introduction to the problem, or a motivation for solving the problem, or a discussion of related work. The purpose of the abstract is to summarize the report and the results.



## Introduction

**Introduction:** a paragraph that starts the report. It introduces the topic of the report and gives a statement that tells the main idea of the report, called a **thesis statement**. All reports should have an introduction. One purpose of the introduction is to introduce the problem

- The introduction should be interesting to grab the reader's attention.
- The introduction sets the scene for the main body of the report. The aims and objectives of the report should be explained in detail. Any problems or limitations in the scope of the report should be identified, and a description of research methods, the parameters of the research and any necessary background history should be included.



## **Discussion ( the body of your report)**

this is the middle part of the report which comprises the main information, data, discussions, analyses, methods, examples and findings. It includes sections and sub-sections.

The main body of the report is where you discuss your material. The facts and evidence you have gathered should be analyzed and discussed with specific reference to the problem or issue. If your discussion section is lengthy you might divide it into section headings. Your points should be grouped and arranged in an order that is logical and easy to follow. Use headings and subheadings to create a clear structure for your material. Use bullet points to present a series of points in an easy-to-follow list. As with the whole report, all sources used should be acknowledged and correctly referenced. For further guidance check your departmental handbook and the Student Learning Centre guide: Referencing and Bibliographies



## Results and Conclusion

**Conclusion:** the paragraph that wraps everything up. It gives the summary of the most important points. A strong conclusion makes the readers feel satisfied that the writer presented a complete and effective report. No new information or materials should be presented here.

In the conclusion you should show the overall significance of what has been covered. You may want to remind the reader of the most important points that have been made in the report or highlight what you consider to be the most central issues or findings. However, no new material should be introduced in the conclusion.



## Main parts in brief

### Introduction

- What will this report be about?
- What is my purpose for writing it?
- What will I be answering, explaining or proving?

### Body

- What facts and details do I need to share?
- How can I prove that my ideas are correct?
- What are my results?

### Conclusion

- What was my main idea or statement?
- Did I answer the question, explain the subject, or prove the argument?
- Is there a point I want people to remember?



# Good vs Bad Reports

## Good

- Concise and accurate information
- Relevant data and details
- Well-structured (all parts included)
- Clear aims and purposes
- Correct wordings and formatting

## Bad

- Too much information
- Not enough information
- Irrelevant data and details
- No structure
- No introduction
- No conclusion
- No aim or purpose
- Language issues
- Formatting issues
- Wrong information



## Planning a Report

- Selecting a Topic
- Making a list of useful keywords
- Searching for sources and saving them
- Reading them
- Reading more and more
- Developing an outline
- Formulate a thesis statement
- Writing first draft, second draft, third, forth, ...final draft
- Proofreading





## Tips for Referencing and Citation

- Give a reference to cited materials  
**(Documentation)**
- Citing without references **(Plagiarism)**
- APA, MLA, Harvard, Chicago style, Oxford, etc. (Styles)



## **Example:**

**Inside text:** (Greenhall, 2010: 15)

Greenhall (2010: 15) stated that ....

According to Greenhall (2010: 15), .....

**In the list of references:** Greenhall, M. (2010).

*Report Writing Skills Training Course.*

Lancashire: Universe of Learning Ltd.



## Writing strategies to avoid plagiarism

- **Quotations:** texts taken word for word from a source enclosed between quotation marks “...”
- **Paraphrasing:** presenting a text in your own words. The paraphrased text is usually shorter than the original source.
- **Summarizing:** presenting the main point(s) of a text in your own words. The summary of a text is very short and gives the broad meaning only.

In all the original author(s) must be provided.



## Academic Poster

- Posters are widely used in the academic community, and most conferences include poster presentations in their program. Research posters summarize information or research concisely and attractively to help publicize it and generate discussion.
- The poster is usually a mixture of a brief text mixed with tables, graphs, pictures, and other presentation formats. At a conference, the researcher stands by the poster display while other participants can come and view the presentation and interact with the author.



## Academic Poster

### Poster Design

- A poster is any piece of printed paper designed to be attached to a wall or vertical surface. Typically posters include both textual and graphic elements, although a poster may be either wholly graphical or wholly text. Posters are designed to be both eye-catching and informative.
- Posters may be used for many purposes. They are a frequent tool of advertisers (particularly of events, musicians and films), propagandists, protestors and other groups trying to communicate a message. There are many types of posters however we only study Academic Posters.



## **Typical requirements of an Academic Poster are:**

- 1-Get the academic content right
- 2-Cut the text down to 300-400 words
- 3-Format the type
- 4-Prepare your images
- 5-Design the layout
- 6-Choose a color scheme
- 7-Check it (very carefully)



## **Pick a software program**

-PowerPoint

## **Organize your poster in columns (easy to follow)**

- Remove unnecessary images and texts (say more with less) Keep posters visual (images and graphics say much more than words)
- Design composition (how graphics interact with words)
- Keep balance and white spaces (keep the background simple)
- The audience (design for your audience) Prepare a 3-5 minute verbal explanation.
- Effective use of colors (create energy, elicit a mood and attract the eye)
- Remove unnecessary elements (say more with less)
- Visual interest and attraction (use shapes, fonts, colors, etc.)
- Design composition (how graphics interact with words)



## Posters font size

In the competitions of Salahaddin University-Erbil, it is preferred to use poster size A1 (59.4 X 84.1cm).

1-Main title (70-90)

2-Subtitle headings (48-54)

3-Authors and supervisors name (40-44)

4-Department, College and University names (36-40)

5-Text body (32-36)

6-Captions (20-24)





## 4- Debate

### Basics of Debate

- A topic/ resolution/ motion/ proposition that is debatable
- Two people or two teams agree or disagree about a specific topic.
- One team is for the topic and one against it.
- The other team is 'the opponent' (regardless which side you are debating)
- Defend your side of a topic





## Group Work: Why group projects?

- Students learn best when they are actively involved
- Students working in small groups learn more and retain it longer
- Students who work in collaborative groups are often more satisfied with their classes



## **Debating and Argumentation:**

Debate: is a formal discussion about a certain topic reaching a common ground between two opposing sides.

Argumentation: it is the process of reasoning the evidence in order to support your opinion. It is summarizing your conclusions in order to convince the opposing side.



## Components of Argumentation:

Students should learn that argumentation consists of the following three components:

1. Statement of possible truth: Students should be trained to start with conclusion they have reached. For example:

*Smoking cigarettes is less harmful than smoking hookah.*

2. Supporting your statements:

It is important that students should be trained so that when they demonstrate their views, they can support their statements with scientific evidence (referring to researches, surveys or collected data) rather than opinion. For example:

*According to World Health Organization, smoking a hookah equals 100 cigarettes.*

3. Explain why the audience should care about the statement:

Through demonstrating the importance of your viewpoint, you tell the audience why they should care about your topic.



## How should we think and debate?

- Thinking process differs from person to another according to intellectual activities.
- Thinking is a human ability that can be developed through training.

## (2) Approaches to learning and teaching:

Two types of learning in daily life are:

1. Teacher-centred Instruction: this is a one-way learning process, from the teacher to the student
2. Student-centred Instruction: this is a two-way learning process, from the teacher to the student and vice versa.



## Argumentation

- Statement of possible truth
- Supporting your statements
- Explain why the audience should care about the statement





## Tips of good debating

- Well preparation
- Research very well
- Understand the topic and your position very well
- Organize your notes
- Read, listen and speak to be a good debater and critical thinker.
- Practice alone or with someone
- Get feedback and make use of it

## **PPPPP**

- Preparation and Practice Prevent Poor Performance



## Selecting a Topic

- The ability to develop a good research topic is an important skill. An instructor may assign you a specific topic, but most often instructors require you to select your own topic of interest. When deciding on a topic, there are a few things that you will need to do:

Brainstorm for ideas

choose a topic that will enable you to read and understand the literature. Ensure that the topic is manageable and that material is available





## **Read General Background Information**

Read a general encyclopedia article on the top two or three topics you are considering. Reading a broad summary enables you to get an overview of the topic and see how your idea relates to broader, narrower, and related issues. It also provides a great source for finding words commonly used to describe the topic. These keywords may be very useful to your later research. If you can't find an article on your topic, try using broader terms and ask for help from a librarian.



## How to give a good presentation?

Why bother giving a good talk?

- First impressions matter!
- There's no point doing good work if others don't know about it or can't understand what you did.
- Good practice for a teaching career! Good practice for any career!
- Helps you sort out what you've done, and understand it better yourself.



## Top ten pointers for a good talk:

1. Be neat
2. Avoid trying to cram too much into one slide: Don't be a slave to your slides.
3. Be brief: use keywords rather than long sentences
4. Avoid covering up slides
5. Use a large font
6. Use color to emphasize
7. Use illustrations to get across key concepts. May include *limited* animation
8. Make eye contact
9. Be ready to skip slides if time is short
10. Practice!!