

DebateForge – Joke Book

A Spark & Anvil joke book. Groan-worthy puns, tricky riddles, silly nonsense, and real fun facts from the world of DebateForge – read them out loud and make someone laugh.

Why did the debater bring a mirror to the podium?

To reflect on their arguments!

How to use this book

Read a joke, pause at the question, and try to guess the answer before you read on. Best of all: read them out loud to a friend, a grown-up, or your class. A good laugh makes the tricky stuff easier – that's real science.

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Puns

Why did the debater bring a mirror to the podium?

💡 To reflect on their arguments!

Why was the straw man argument so easy to beat?

💡 Because it was stuffed with nothing!

Why did the public speaker go to the bakery?

💡 Because they kneaded to work on their delivery!

What did the thesis statement say to the supporting evidence?

💡 "I couldn't stand on my own without you!"

Why did the logical fallacy go to therapy?

💡 Because it had too many issues with its reasoning!

Why was the rebuttal always the last one picked for teams?

💡 Because it only showed up to tear everyone else's arguments down!

What's a debater's favorite type of music?

💡 Counterpoint!

Why did the ad hominem attack get kicked out of the debate tournament?

💡 Because it got personal instead of addressing the argument!

Why did the persuasive essay feel confident at the dance?

💡 Because it had all the right moves -- ethos, pathos, and logos!

Why was the opening statement nervous?

💡 Because it knew it only had one chance to make a first impression!

Why did the slippery slope argument slide off the stage?

💡 Because one thing just led to another, and another, and another!

What did the moderator say to the debaters who kept interrupting?

💡 "Order! I demand order!" "Okay, I'll have a pizza." "That's not what I meant!"

Why did the evidence go to the gym?

💡 To strengthen its supporting claims!

Why was the circular argument always going nowhere?

💡 Because every time it finished, it was right back where it started!

What did the conclusion say to the introduction?

💡 "We've come a long way from where you started, but honestly, I said it better!"

Why did the bandwagon fallacy have so many friends?

💡 Because everyone just jumped on without thinking!

Why was the debate team captain good at chess?

💡 Because they always thought several moves ahead!

Why did the red herring get lost during the debate?

💡 Because it kept dragging the conversation off track!

Why did the cross-examiner make a great detective?

💡 Because they never asked a question they didn't already know the answer to!

What did the source citation say during the argument?

💡 "Don't take my word for it -- check the footnotes!"

Riddles

I'm a type of argument where the conclusion is already hiding in the premise. I go around in circles and never actually prove anything new. What am I?

💡 Circular reasoning! Also called "begging the question" -- the conclusion is assumed in the starting point.

I'm one of three tools Aristotle said you need to persuade people. I appeal to emotions -- making the audience feel something. What am I?

💡 Pathos! Along with ethos (credibility) and logos (logic), it's one of the three rhetorical appeals.

I'm what you do after someone makes their argument. I point out the weaknesses, challenge the evidence, and offer a different perspective. What am I?

💡 A rebuttal! It's the response to an opponent's argument in a debate.

I happen when someone attacks the person making the argument instead of the argument itself. I'm a cheap shot, not a real counterpoint. What am I?

💡 An ad hominem attack! Latin for "to the person," it's one of the most common logical fallacies.

I'm the claim you're trying to prove in a debate. Everything else -- your evidence, your reasoning, your examples -- exists to support me. What am I?

💡 A thesis statement! It's the central argument that holds the whole case together.

I'm a distraction disguised as an argument. I look related, but I actually pull the conversation away from the real issue. What am I?

💡 A red herring! Named after the smelly fish once used to throw hunting dogs off a trail.

I appeal to your sense of trust and credibility. If you believe the speaker is an expert, honest, and fair, I'm doing my job. What am I?

💡 Ethos! Speakers build ethos by showing expertise, fairness, and good character.

I use numbers, facts, statistics, and logical reasoning to convince you. I'm the most "brain" of the three rhetorical appeals. What am I?

💡 Logos! It's the appeal to logic and reason, often supported by data and evidence.

I'm what happens when someone exaggerates their opponent's argument to make it easier to attack. I'm not the real argument -- I'm a weaker version of it. What am I?

💡 A straw man fallacy! The debater knocks down the fake version instead of addressing the real one.

I'm a claim that if one small thing happens, a chain of terrible things will inevitably follow. I skip over all the steps in between. What am I?

💡 A slippery slope fallacy! It assumes that one step leads to an extreme outcome without evidence for each step.

I'm the person in a formal debate who keeps time, enforces the rules, and makes sure both sides play fair. What am I?

💡 A moderator! They ensure the debate stays organized and each speaker gets equal time.

I'm an argument that says something must be true because lots of people believe it. Popularity doesn't equal proof, but I try to convince you otherwise. What am I?

💡 The bandwagon fallacy! Also called "appeal to popularity" -- just because many believe it doesn't make it true.

I give you only two options when there are actually more to choose from. "You're either with us or against us!" is my favorite line. What am I?

💡 A false dilemma! Also called a false dichotomy -- it ignores the middle ground and other possibilities.

I'm the part of a debate where you get to ask your opponent direct questions. My goal is to expose weaknesses in their argument. What am I?

💡 Cross-examination! It's the questioning period between constructive speeches in formal debate.

I'm what a speaker does before stepping up to the podium. I involve researching both sides, organizing my arguments, and anticipating what my opponent might say. What am I?

💡 Preparation! The most important part of any debate happens before the debate begins.

I'm an argument that says something is right because "we've always done it this way." Tradition doesn't prove truth, but I pretend it does. What am I?

💡 An appeal to tradition! Just because something has been done before doesn't mean it should continue.

I'm a short, memorable phrase designed to stick in people's minds and sum up a position. Politicians and advertisers love me. What am I?

💡 A slogan! Effective slogans use rhythm, repetition, and simple language for maximum impact.

I'm the side of the debate that argues for change -- that the current system needs to be different. What am I?

💡 The affirmative side! Also called "pro" -- they argue in favor of the resolution and carry the burden of proof.

I'm an argument where someone says "this expert agrees with me" -- but the expert's field has nothing to do with the topic. What am I?

💡 An appeal to false authority! A basketball star endorsing a science claim isn't real expertise.

I'm the feeling you get in your stomach when you realize your opponent just made a really good point and you don't have an answer ready. Experienced debaters learn to handle me gracefully. What am I?

 Being stumped! Good debaters acknowledge strong points and redirect rather than panicking.

Silly Stuff

If logical fallacies were supervillains, the Straw Man would build a fake version of the hero and then beat it up on live TV. The Red Herring would release a giant fish to distract everyone. And the Slippery Slope would just scream "IF WE ALLOW THIS, EVERYTHING WILL COLLAPSE" while sliding down a waterslide.

Imagine if everyday conversations had debate rules. "Mom, I want ice cream." "The opposition has 30 seconds for cross-examination." "Why do you believe you deserve ice cream when you haven't finished your vegetables?" "Point of order -- she's introducing new evidence about broccoli that wasn't in the original argument!"

The ancient Greeks invented rhetoric -- the art of persuasion -- and honestly, they used it for everything. Court cases, political speeches, convincing someone at the market to sell olives for a better price. Aristotle basically wrote the first-ever "How to Win an Argument" book, and people are still using his tricks 2,400 years later.

A bandwagon fallacy walks into a room and says, "Everyone agrees with me, so I must be right." Flat Earth once had a bandwagon. So did the idea that tomatoes were poisonous. Popularity is a terrible compass.

If debates worked like social media arguments, nobody would ever listen, everyone would just repeat their point louder, and the person with the most likes would be declared the winner regardless of logic. Actually, wait -- that does sound familiar.

Imagine if your school had a Department of Rebuttals. Every time someone said something in class, a kid in a suit would stand up and say, "While my esteemed colleague raises an interesting point about lunch being too short, I'd like to present three counterarguments and a graph showing optimal nutrition intake times."

The ad hominem fallacy is basically saying "Your argument is wrong because you have a weird haircut." Which, even if the haircut IS weird, tells you absolutely nothing about whether their argument is valid. Terrible logic. Great distraction.

If pathos, ethos, and logos were a band, Pathos would be the singer who makes everyone cry. Logos would be the drummer who keeps perfect time and counts every beat. And Ethos would be the lead guitarist who everyone trusts because they've been playing since they were five.

A false dilemma told you that you can either eat vegetables or starve. Those are your only options. No fruit. No pasta. No sandwiches. Just broccoli or doom. If you ever find yourself with only two extreme choices and nothing in between, congratulations: you've met the false dilemma.

Cross-examination in debate is the art of asking questions you already know the answer to, so when your opponent gives the wrong answer, you can pounce. It's like being a detective in a crime show, except the crime is a bad argument and your magnifying glass is a really good follow-up question.

If every argument needed a works-cited page, playground disputes would get very academic. "I call the swing." "On what basis? Please cite your source." "Jackson v. The Playground, recess period three, last Tuesday." "Objection -- that precedent was overturned when the teacher said we take turns."

The circular argument is the hamster wheel of logic. "Why is this true?" "Because it is." "But why?" "Because I said it's true." "And why should I believe you?" "Because what I'm saying is true." Round and round we go. The hamster is exhausted and nobody's learned anything.

Professional debate judges take notes using a system called "flowing" where they track every argument on a giant piece of paper with columns and arrows. By the end of a round, the paper looks like a conspiracy theory board from a detective movie -- all that's missing is the red string.

Public speaking is ranked as people's number-one fear, above spiders, heights, and the dark. This means the average person at a funeral would rather be in the coffin than giving the eulogy. And yet, debaters do it for FUN. Repeatedly. On weekends.

Imagine a debate tournament where the topic is "Is water wet?" Both sides would have to prepare extensive cases with evidence. The affirmative would cite molecular adhesion. The negative would argue water makes things wet but isn't itself wet. There would be tears. There would be rebuttals. And nobody would ever agree.

Fun Facts

Did you know? The word "rhetoric" comes from the ancient Greek "rhetorike," meaning "the art of the speaker." The Greeks considered rhetoric one of the essential subjects every educated citizen should study, alongside grammar and logic!

Did you know? Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas held seven famous debates in 1858, and each debate lasted about three hours! One speaker would talk for 60 minutes, the other for 90, then the first got 30 more. Modern presidential debates are 90 minutes total with both candidates.

Did you know? The word "fallacy" comes from the Latin "fallacia," meaning "deception" or "trick." Aristotle identified 13 logical fallacies over 2,300 years ago, and we still use many of his categories today!

Did you know? In ancient Athens, citizens had to argue their own court cases -- there were no lawyers! This meant everyone needed to learn the art of persuasion, which is why rhetoric became a core part of Greek education.

Did you know? The first televised U.S. presidential debate was in 1960 between Kennedy and Nixon. People who watched on TV thought Kennedy won because he looked calm and confident, while people who listened on the radio thought Nixon won on substance. It proved that delivery matters as much as content!

Did you know? Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech uses at least 12 different rhetorical techniques, including anaphora (repeating "I have a dream"), metaphor, allusion, and antithesis. It's considered one of the greatest speeches in history!

Did you know? The red herring fallacy gets its name from an old practice of dragging a smoked fish (which turns red) across a trail to throw hunting dogs off the scent. Whether this actually happened is debated -- which is kind of fitting for a fallacy about distraction!

Did you know? In competitive debate, there are multiple formats with different rules. Lincoln-Douglas focuses on values and philosophy, Policy debate involves detailed plans, and Parliamentary debate requires thinking on your feet with only minutes to prepare!

Did you know? Studies show that people are more persuaded by stories than by statistics alone! Researchers call this the "identifiable victim effect" -- we respond more to one person's story than to numbers representing millions.

Did you know? The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates never wrote anything down! Everything we know about his arguments comes from his student Plato, who recorded their dialogues. Socrates' method of asking questions to expose flawed thinking is still called the "Socratic method" today.

Did you know? High school debate team alumni include Supreme Court justices, CEOs, and multiple U.S. Presidents. Studies show that debate participation improves critical thinking scores more than almost any other extracurricular activity!

Did you know? The "burden of proof" in debate means the side proposing change has to prove why change is needed -- the other side doesn't have to prove the current system is perfect. This same principle is used in courtrooms: "innocent until proven guilty"!

Did you know? The word "devil's advocate" comes from the Catholic Church! When considering someone for sainthood, one official was assigned to argue against the candidate. This role, called "Advocatus Diaboli," was created in 1587 to ensure every argument was tested.

Did you know? Body language accounts for up to 55% of how a message is received, according to research. That's why experienced debaters pay attention to posture, eye contact, and gestures -- not just their words!

Did you know? The straw man fallacy is named after the practice dummies used in military training. Soldiers would practice fighting against straw-stuffed figures because they were easy to defeat -- just like a distorted version of someone's real argument!

Keep laughing

That's **70 jokes** from DebateForge. Made someone laugh? Try making up your own – the best jokes are the ones you tell.

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