

Science Ethics Debate

LEVEL:	High School
DESIGN TYPE:	Prepared in Advance
DESIGN TEAM COMPOSITION:	2 students per team

DESIGN CHALLENGE:

Students will prepare and present a 3-5 minute oral argument defending one of three (3) issues of their choice. 1 student will debate against another member from their school, each presenting arguments for each side. Each student will be evaluated on how well they understand the topic, their presentation style, Information presented, use of facts, statistics and examples and respect for the opposition. The combined score of each team will be compared against all other teams that compete in this competition. (Example: Acme High has Jack and Jill, Jack and Jill will argue opposite sides for Topic A. Jack's score, according to the score sheet, was a 70%; Jill's 50%. Combined they got a 60% to represent the Acme High team. Acme High's 60% is then compared against all other school's competing.) Judges will look for well thought-out and convincing arguments to be presented. Teams are encouraged to practice significantly before the competition date.

DESIGN MATERIALS:

- 2 Podiums

CHALLENGE RULES:

Members in MESA clubs will prepare and deliver argument statements against each other in front of a panel of judges at the HS Science and Engineering Jamboree. A standard issue US coin will be used to determine who will present first, following traditional Head-or-Tails rules. Students should be prepared to present either first or second. Sessions will be closed to the public, only the two debaters and judges will be allowed in the room.

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

1: Over the last year the United States has undergone financial struggles that have forced the reevaluation of various government funded programs to help eliminate the accumulated debt. One of the programs that could lose funding could be future space exploration. Is it in the best interest of the United States of America to eliminate their financial support for this program or should it be continued?

2: With growing concerns for national security, technology enables the government to monitor countless details of our lives, such as phone conversations, email tracking, satellite surveillance, etc. Has the government gone too far and invaded the privacy of its citizens or is this technology necessary to fight crime and insure the safety of all Americans?

3: Every 4 minutes a person is diagnosed with a blood cancer. Embryonic stem cells have the potential to be an unlimited supply of blood cells for patients with this disease and could ultimately cure them. However, in order to obtain embryonic stem cells, an embryo must be destroyed. Is it ethical to use embryonic stem cells to save lives while destroying another embryo?

SCORING:

Students will be scored according to the Debate Rubric posted on the CMESA website. Awards will be given for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams.