

Lincoln-Douglass Debate

In art, form ought to be valued over content.

Lincoln-Douglas debate assesses the principles and values that should govern our actions. A value gets at the main issue of the debate.

In this example, you could ask what is the purpose of art? That should get you started thinking about key issues. As you research the art topic, think about all the implications of what would happen if one only valued form? If one only valued content?

Come up with some values that support form or content. The value must support the resolution. The value is how you communicate whether form or content should be valued. (If you are stuck on what values relate to this topic, simply Google: “list of values”) Some examples are below:

Value		Supports form or content?
Beauty	→	form (beauty comes from color and shape, etc. not from the content)
Peace/harmony	→	form (art that is calming and aesthetically pleasing)
Skill	→	form (art that has great technical ability backs up the value of form)
Structure/order	→	form (art that has structure and order backs up form over content)
Clarity	→	form (art that has clear form/image backs up form over content)
Excellence & mastery	→	form (art that clearly was created with excellence and mastery backs up form over content)
Social justice	→	content (art that supports issues of social justice comes from the content or meaning of the art)
Patriotism	→	content (art that supports American values and government backs up content over form)
Resourcefulness	→	content (art that is resourceful, using objects around is resourceful and can have interesting ideas behind it, backing up content over form)
Compassion	→	content (art with a message to lift up oppressed people backs up content over form)

Lincoln-Douglas Debate steps:

- First, define all terms of the resolution. (The other handout about art, form, and content will help for this.)
- Choose which values you will use for your argument. Define and explain how the value will uphold the resolution.
- Give several reasons to present your case. Find quotes to back it up (but don't use Scripture for your support). So you might research famous artists, philosophers, etc.
- Explain why your opponent's value is of lesser importance (which is why we don't use Scripture in this debate).