

Chemical Scholarship Debate: Splenda (Group 11/18)

The purpose of this assignment is to have you assess scientific data and make decisions regarding that data in terms of public policy. For the purposes of this assignment, you will be assigned a position to defend. However, keep in mind that to most effectively argue your case, you will need an understanding of both positions.

The two positions are:

- 1) Advocacy for Splenda...it is everything it claims to be and we should expand its use
- 2) Advocacy against Splenda...it is not natural and it should not be consumed

In our debate, held in discussion on Wednesday, November 16th, your section will be divided into four groups. Each debate will be between two groups. The first two groups will hold their debate during the first half of discussion while the other two groups meet elsewhere and work on planning for the Watershed project. The groups will then switch for the second half of class.

Try to focus your debate on the chemistry of Splenda (its structure, the manner in which it is metabolized or not in the body, and the issue of the chlorine in Splenda) and on scientific inquiry and the validity of the results of scientific reports. As always, be sure to cite your references.

The debate will be divided into the following parts:

	Chips	Time	Points
Opening	2	5 min	7
Rebuttal	2	2 min	4
Question 1	1	30 sec	2
Answer 1	1	1 min	3
Question 2	1	30 sec	2
Answer 2	1	1 min	3
Question 3	1	30 sec	2
Answer 3	1	1 min	3
Closing	2	3 min	4

Chips

Each debate requires 12 chips to complete. Before the debate begins, each group member will receive 2 (team of 6), or 3 chips (team of 4 or 5). Before you contribute a section of the debate, you must pay the required number of chips. When you are out of chips, you will not be allowed to speak again. This system has been put in place to make sure that everyone on your team has a chance to be a debate speaker.

You may use notecards/notes to assist you in citing statistics and details. These notecards are not for you to read directly from. A point will be taken off when a person spends their entire allotted time reading a prepared statement.

Opening Statement (5 minutes)

Your chance to clearly state your position and to back it up with facts, research, scientific evidence, etc.

Cost is one of the factors in establishing a policy argument (whose wallet the money comes from and whose it goes into.) Another facet of debate over policy is appealing to people's emotions. Given the purpose of the debate is having you explore the chemistry and science related to these issues, do not rely primarily on emotions to advocate your position.

Arguments may be assertive (criticism of another's position) or defensive (supportive of your position). Choose the method that you think will be most effective.

The use of Powerpoint is allowed, however, all files for initial statements must be emailed to Dr. Gottfried (acgottfr@umich.edu) no later than November 15th at 6pm.

7 points for making clear, convincing, well-organized argument for your position and its superiority to the other level proposed; argument based on research and documented facts should be included

Rebuttal (2 minutes)

You will have 1 minutes after both of the opening statements to fine tune your rebuttal.

As part of your research and preparation you should be able to address the criticisms of your position raised by the other groups in their initial statements. Your rebuttals should include logical, fact-based arguments (continuing to cite sources of course.) There must be some defensive response to the criticisms raised by the other group during the rebuttal.

4 points for addressing critique raised by other groups and providing a plausible, fact-based defense of position

Questions (30 seconds)

This is your chance to question an aspect of the other group's position. The question should be specific.

An example of a poor question, "Why do you think Splenda is good?"
(too general... basically this is what is asked of the other group in the opening statement.)

An example of a much more effective question, "Criques have claimed that limited testing has been carried out on Splenda, particularly_____. How can you support your claim that Splenda is clinically proven with this limited amount of testing?"

2 points each for clear, concise questions that show insight into the issue

Answers (1 minute)

In preparing for the debate, you should also prepare answers. Since you are working as a team, you will have 30 seconds to consult on your answer. Then you should be prepared with a comeback that spends some time directly answering the question.

3 points each for answers which directly answer the questions with insight into the issue at hand and cited facts to back up claims

Summary (3 minutes)

You will have 1 minute to consult with your group before the summaries begin.

Your summary is your chance to restate or highlight the positive aspects of your position. This is also your last chance to leave the panel with your best emotional and factual appeal. Your summary should include your key responses to the criticisms of your position brought up by the other groups during the debate.

4 points clear restatement of position including new defense; strong take-home message