It’s Debatable

Revving up your intellectual engine
de·bate

[daˈbæt]

NOUN
1. a formal discussion on a particular topic in which opposing arguments are put forward

**synonyms**: discussion - dialogue - argument

VERB
1. argue about (a topic), especially in a formal manner

**synonyms**: discuss - talk over/through - talk about
Benefits

There are numerous benefits to participating in a competitive, classroom debate. Here are just a few ways they rev up your intellectual engine:

• Debate teaches that there are two sides to most controversial topics and provides in-depth knowledge and an appreciation for both sides.
• Debate fosters active listening.
• Debate encourages organizing and prioritizing information.
• Debate promotes problem solving and innovative thinking.
• Debate encourages effective written and oral communication.
• Debate promotes collaboration and camaraderie.
Explain the difference between the following two questions:

1. How do genes determine the traits of an organism?

2. Do genes determine the destiny of an organism?
Do genes determine the destiny of an organism? This question:

• Is open-ended; that is, it does not have a single, final, and correct answer.
• Is thought-provoking and intellectually engaging.
• Calls for higher-order thinking, such as analysis, inference, evaluation, and prediction and cannot be effectively answered by recall alone.
• Points toward important, transferable ideas within (and sometimes across) disciplines.
• Raises additional questions and sparks further inquiry.
• Requires support and justification, not just an answer.
• Recurs over time; that is, it can and should be revisited again and again.
Which questions below meet the criteria for essential questions?

1. Should we continue ethanol production?
2. What are the physical components of matter?
3. What force attracts objects together?
4. Is aging a disease?
5. Are we ready for the future?
relevant

[ˈreləvənt]

ADJECTIVE

1. relating to a subject in an appropriate way

synonyms: pertinent - applicable
For an investigation on the periodic table, which question below meets the criteria for being BOTH relevant and essential?

1. What is the atomic number of hydrogen?
2. Does understanding hydrogen help us solve problems and make decisions?
For a debate to occur, the following roles are required:

- An odd number of judges, preferably three or five. No ties are awarded this way.
- Two teams, one Affirmative, one Negative, each with half of the remaining students.
rubric

[ˈrʌbrik]

NOUN

1. a scoring guide used to evaluate the quality of students' constructed responses.
With a relevant, essential question posted and roles assigned, it is time to begin gathering evidence.

- Each team member is responsible for contributing four, specific and valid ideas to support their side of the debate.

- Each judge is responsible for locating two, specific and valid ideas to support each side of the debate.
The **Debate Dos** allow for a fluid, respectful experience enjoyed by all.

- Be polite and courteous.
- Listen attentively.
- Be respectful and supportive of peers.
- Allow others to express their opinions.
- Use grammatically correct language.
- Speak clearly, slowly, and loud enough to be heard by your audience.
- Speak with passion and excitement.
Useful Phrases

Stating an opinion
• We (don’t) think that…
• In our opinion…

Disagreeing
• We see your point, but…

Sequencing
• Firstly…, secondly…, our third point is that…
• To begin, we think that…; in addition…; last but not least….
Day 1 - Research

Day 2 – Position Statements and First Rebuttals

Day 3 – Responses, Position Summaries, and Judge Statements
As mentioned earlier in the presentation, there are numerous benefits to participating in a competitive, classroom debate. No matter whose team is awarded the judges’ points, everyone walks away a winner.

In addition to gaining awareness that there are two sides to most controversial topics, the essential questions introduced within debates will circle through your minds indefinitely.

The continued banter that ensues as you wrestle with, ponder, read and talk about each question over the course of time will allow you to construct individual meaning for each question. And this is a winning way to learn!