

Syllabus

INTRO TO DEBATE

Heritage Academy A University-Model® School

The mission of Heritage Academy, a Certified University-Model School, is to partner with Christian parents to prepare college-worthy, character witnesses for Jesus Christ.

I. Course Purpose and Content

Intro to Debate is a beginning level course for middle school students who are interested in the fundamentals of debate. Upon completion of this course, the learner will apply advocacy and argumentation skills (claim/warrant/evidence) through effective reading, writing, and listening. In an effort to foster mastery, as well as confidence, the focus of the course will concentrate on the student's ability to carefully construct reasoned arguments, as well as SPAR (Spontaneous Argument). Utilizing the tools set forth, they will gain a meaningful appreciation for effective research, strategic planning, recognition of formal and informal language, "keeping their cool," and identifying verbal and nonverbal language.

Pre-requisite: Student must be reading at or above the sixth-grade level.

II. Worldview Integration

Heritage Academy is committed to teaching subjects in such a way that students develop a biblical worldview out of which to think and act. This particular Able Mind course will invite students to consider the following:

- Having created people to bear his image, God has given human beings unique capacities for language, creativity, reason, memory, relationship, love, worship, and rulership. God has designed us to live in dominion, intending that we carefully tend to and use the resources around us to nurture life by practicing self-rule (under God) and rulership over created things for the joy of mankind and glory of God (Genesis 1:26-27; II Peter 1: 3-7).
- God has designed each of us to be unique, according to His good pleasure and purpose (Psalm 139; Revelation 4:11).
- By investing time to discover and cultivate our general and unique capacities, strengths, and weakness, we can more effectively live in dominion because we become more able to practice intentional self-rule (under God) and intentional approach to our responsibilities, opportunities, and relationships. As we embrace God's design for us and surrender to his rulership, we can anticipate experiencing His power effectively at work in us so that we may also look ahead with expectation to the day when God will say, "Well done good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Master" (Matthew 25: 23).
- God desires us to live as wise people who recognize and honor his ways and purposes, rather than as people of folly who depend on our own wisdom and neglect God's life-giving gifts and wisdom for us (Proverbs 3:5-6, James 3:13-18).
- God desires us to thrive in relationship with Him, which we experience as we walk in faith, hope, and love, submitting ourselves to his ways and wisdom (Matthew 11:28-29).

III. Required Texts & Materials

Please reference Required Text Book List and Course Supplies List for the appropriate academic year to identify the textbooks and supplies students will need for this course. Both the Required Text Book List and Course Supplies

List are accessible online.

IV. Course Guidelines/Student Requirements

A. Attendance

Attendance is imperative as concepts cannot be learned if a student is absent. Students are expected to attend class and contribute positively to the classroom environment.

Tardiness is disruptive to other class members. Please arrive on time and prepared. All absences and tardies are considered unexcused unless accompanied by a note from a parent or guardian. Please remember that three tardies generate one absence.

As communicated in Heritage Academy's Family Manual, a passing grade awarded at the end of the semester generally requires that a secondary student has attended at least forty-two class periods during the semester. Failure to meet this minimum attendance requirement may result in an F being awarded and recorded on the student's transcript.

B. Absences and Late Work

In the case of planned absence(s), homework that is due during the student's absence must be completed and submitted to the instructor in advance.

When a student is unexpectedly and unavoidably absent due to ill health, past-due assignments must be submitted within two course periods after the student's return to school. When an unexpected absence must occur, please be sure to notify the school office and the instructor of the students' absence as quickly as possible, preferably before the involved class occurs. This contact may occur by phone or by email.

Late work that is submitted simply "late" will be graded and penalized with a ten percent grade reduction for each course period that it is late; homework will not be accepted more than three course periods (1 week) past its due date, unless previous arrangements between the teacher and the student's parent have been agreed to in light of peculiar circumstances that are occurring beyond the family's control.

C. Student Conduct and Preparation for Learning

For the sake of promoting a safe and focused learning environment, the student is expected to do the following throughout the course of the semester:

- 1) Arrive on time to each class period with the appropriate class materials available for access (e.g., organized notebook with dividers and filed materials, paper, writing tools, texts, and other tools as directed)
- 2) Arrive prepared to submit completed at-home assignments at start of each class period.
- 3) Arrive ready to listen, learn, take notes, and participate in teacher-directed classroom discussions and activities.
- 4) Ask for clarification or further explanation when a concept or direction remains unclear.
- 5) Demonstrate a spirit of cooperation, kindness, and respect toward the teacher and fellow classmates, in keeping with Heritage Academy's Code of Conduct.
- 6) Help keep the classroom area clean and orderly.
- 7) Cooperate with the parent-educator and the Heritage Academy teacher to complete homework in a timely fashion
- 8) Communicate concerns regarding schoolwork to both the Heritage Academy teacher and the parent-

educator, so that these concerns can be addressed quickly.

9) On the whole, conduct himself or herself in a manner that is worthy of Christ and reflects the life of the Holy Spirit in him/her: “. . . that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way:

bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light” (Colossians 1:12).

D. At-Home (Satellite Classroom) Investment

Daily home-assignments will be outlined on the weekly Home-Communication Sheet the student will receive each Monday. The student can expect to invest approximately 4 hours each week completing coursework at home in preparation for class periods. Course assignments may include any of the following:

- Reading and responsive analysis or reflection (written or oral)
- Self-reflection and critique
- Typing arguments on a word processor
- Completing Research / Special Projects: Students may be directed to research for various projects throughout the semester for the purpose of presenting information or interpretation. Such projects will most likely include web work and/or visits to the library. Plagiarism is never acceptable.
- Memorization Work
- Dialogue: Student may be instructed to discuss and/or explore certain topics or concepts with a parent. These assignments will be given purposefully and should not be dismissed.
- Preparation for Tests and Quizzes: Students may be instructed to review notes, various texts, previously completed tests, scripture verses and/or to complete review questions or study guides, etc., in preparation for tests.
- Other Assignments: additional types of assignments may be given throughout the semester at the discretion of the instructor.

D. Assessments

A number of written examinations or equivalent alternative assessments/projects will be given throughout the course of the semester. A cumulative semester exam, fifty minutes in length, will also occur during the last week of the semester.

E. Grades

Grade Apportionment	Grading Scale	
Regular At-Home Assignments 40%	100-95...A	79-77...C+
Daily Participation 20%	94-90...A-	76-73...C
Tests/Alternative Assessments/Projects 40%	89-87...B+	72-70...C-
	86-83...B	69-60...D
	82-80...B-	59 or below... F

The course grade the student is awarded at the end of the semester will indicate the grade that will also appear on the student's transcript. Only grades at or above a C- or 70% will be considered passing and will also require that the student has fulfilled attendance requirements.

V. Parent Responsibilities

A. Embracing the University Model

University-Model Schooling at Heritage Academy is driven by two guiding principles:

- ◆ to preserve and strengthen God-ordained family relationships
- ◆ to offer students the opportunity to achieve a high degree of academic excellence.

Heritage Academy operates as a University-Model School[®], designed for families who want their students to flourish from a life anchored in the home yet still gain from the best aspects of traditional, classroom education. Courses offered at Heritage Academy occur every-other-day so that students may realize the benefits of qualified teachers and a focused learning community, yet continue to experience home as the primary, consistent base where parents remain their foremost guides for spiritual, social, academic, and character formation.

Parents, please consider ways you may maximize the benefits University-Model Schooling offers to your family. How can you as parents utilize the at-home study time this model provides to nurture deeper relationship and model and impart the faith, values, and life-patterns you desire your student to embrace?

B. Fulfilling the Parent Role

Within the University-Model School[®], parents commit to fulfill a specified role related to each course in which their student is enrolled, as prescribed by the course's description. Each role identifies specific responsibilities that the teacher relies on the parent to perform, thus facilitating effective home/school partnership whereby students are assured of receiving needed support. For this course, Heritage Academy has designated parents the role of "Guide for Dependent Study."

This role recognizes that many courses at this level will begin to cover subject matter that may be unfamiliar to many parents. At the same time, the student is at a dependent age where disciplined study habits and strategies for managing time must be developed, not by parental force, but through positive encouragement and through the student's growing awareness of personal consequences. In order for this class to be successful, I as a teacher am depending upon you as parents to ensure that your son or daughter keeps up with the course material and to communicate with me should any difficulties or concerns arise.

C. Monitor Gradelink and View Seven-Week and Thirteen-Week Gradelink Reports

As your student earns grades for completed tests, quizzes, and various projects and homework assignments, these will be recorded on **Gradelink.com** for you to view at your convenience. My general goal will be to post grades online within a week of their being awarded.

In Gradelink, missing assignments will also be noted. Please take time to follow your student's progress on Gradelink so that you can quickly recognize and explore/address areas of patterns of difficulty or concern that may appear and affirm positive accomplishments.

Gradelink Reports, which will include parent-directed comments related to your student's behavior and progress in class, will be ready for parents to view at the seven-week and thirteen-week point in the semester.

Please contact the office if you have not received your Gradelink login information.

D. Attend Parent/Teacher Fellowship

I hope you will take time to come to Parent/Teacher Fellowship scheduled during the 7th week of each semester. This will give you and I brief opportunity to connect face-to-face and discuss your student's progress, making the most of the partnership that is so vital to students' success within the University Model[®]

VI. Contacting the Instructor

Teacher contact information will be provided on the weekly communication sheets that will be distributed in class or may be found in the school directory.