

CLASS SYMPOSIUM

A symposium is a form of public discussion in which a group of experts divides up a topic. Each member is allotted a certain amount of time in which to make a brief statement. After these prepared remarks, the experts may participate in a panel discussion, they may question one another, another group of interrogators may question them, or the audience may be invited to participate. The group may partition the topic according to the interest and knowledge of individual members, or it may have its members take opposing views on a controversial issue.

PROCEDURE

1. Organize yourselves into groups of three, four, or five.
2. Decide on a topic that interests your group and will be of interest to the class. Register it with me.
3. Divide the labor. One person in each group assumes the role of moderator. That person announces the topic, comments generally about it, introduces the other speakers, and keeps discussion moving. Then each speaker discusses an aspect of the topic without interruption. Next, the moderator encourages interaction between panel members after their initial remarks and opens the discussion to questions from the audience. Finally, the moderator gives a concluding statement.
4. Limit your topic to what can be handled in fifteen minutes.
5. Prepare note cards and a bibliography of sources used. Note cards and bibliographies must be turned in to me after your presentation.

SPEAKER CHECKLIST

1. Show interest in your topic.
2. Establish eye contact with the audience.
3. Refer as little as possible to your notes.
4. Sit up straight and appear poised and alert.
5. Speak with animation in your face and voice.
6. Make effective use of your hands.
7. Dress neatly and appropriately.
8. Adopt an open-minded, objective, and unbiased attitude.
9. Contribute your fair share without monopolizing the discussion; make comments short and to the point.
10. Be courteous to fellow panel members and to the audience.
11. Convince your audience that what you have to say is important and that you know what you are talking about.