

Taking Notes in Debate

1. Set up your note-taking paper prior to the start of the debate. Split the paper into columns, based on the number of rounds each debate will last. For example, a debate with three rounds should have three columns.
2. Use shorthand abbreviations while taking notes. Leave out vowels, or write just the first few letters of a word to save time. Be sure to only use abbreviations that you understand, and write clearly enough to be able to read your notes after the round.
3. Avoid writing down everything that your opponent says. Focus on jotting down key points and arguments that you want to highlight during your time to speak.
4. Jot down a note in the first column of your note paper for each main argument that your opponent makes. In the next column, make notes regarding contradictory statements that your opponent makes or valid arguments from your point of view, as they relate to each argument. Use arrows to connect arguments made by your opponent and ideas that you want to express in order to keep track of the relationships.
5. Use a new column for note-taking in each round of debate.