

Scientific Blitz

Session, 30 minutes daily, 24-hour preparation

A structured debate on a provocative and relevant topic, the Scientific Blitz pits two students against each other, one as the presenter and the other as the opponent, to argue for or against a pre-assigned topic. The Scientific Blitz:

- Marks the punctual start of the day.
- Engages students in scientific debate.
- Puts students' database-search skills to use in identifying relevant literature.
- Alerts students to the broader social and scientific context of their research.
- Requires students to read rapidly and develop arguments to support the claim they have been assigned.

Watch this video to prepare for the session:



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:

<https://pressbooks.pub/cartacurricula/?p=1746#oembed-1>

Download the [curriculum](#) for this session.

Outcomes

By the end of a series of Scientific Blitz sessions, students can:

- Rapidly cover the background to an important research question.
- Identify materials in databases and condense them into short oral contributions.
- Feel comfortable with the concept and practice of scientific debate.
- Reflect on and critique the social and scientific context of specific research.

Preparation

As facilitator

Coordinate these sessions with your program. CARTA timetabled a Blitz every weekday over a four-week period, in-person. Prepare a list of topic statements per day and a key reference for each topic. Select suitable articles from CARTA's selection online or from your own reading.

Identify and announce two speakers for each Blitz: one student as the lead speaker for the motion, and another as the opponent.

Hand out or share the link to the key reference per Blitz to all participating students 24 hours in advance (no earlier!)

The two speakers

Expand their knowledge on the subject by searching relevant databases.

Prepare their arguments for or against the topic statement.

All participating students

Read the key reference for the day.

Find and read other materials around the selected topic.

Steps

The facilitator opens the session and monitors time strictly.

The speaker has ten minutes to introduce the topic, describe the controversy and present their argument.

The opponent has two minutes to present their views.

The speaker has five minutes to respond to the opponent and defend their view.

The facilitator opens the floor for an eleven-minute general discussion.