

Challenge 4: Environmental Debate

YOUR CHALLENGE:

Each year the Fairchild Challenge hosts a debate for high school students to use their voices to deliberate real environmental policies that are being considered at different governmental levels. This year's debate will delve into interactions between urban spaces and our natural ecosystem. Human landscapes are supported by countless biological and ecological processes. The debate will explore how legislators at different levels regulate and balance urban and natural elements. You'll dive into topics on a local, national, and international scale. As you research these topics, consider the issue from different perspectives, both for and against various ideas that attempt to create successful communities by blending them with nature. Through our Environmental Debate Tournament, you'll sharpen your critical thinking skills by analyzing these diverse viewpoints. The tournament also provides a platform to develop your confidence and public speaking skills as you present your arguments.

REGISTRATION DUE: January 30, 2026

DEBATE TOURNAMENT EVENT: February 18, 2026

- Up to 6 debaters per school
 - Two main teams (2 students per team)
 - One alternate team (2 students in the team)

Participants per submission: Student Group

POINT SYSTEM:

Maximum Points	100 points per 2-person team <u>(2 main teams per school)</u>
Bonus Points	25 bonus points for having an alternate team of 2 students 20 bonus points for Semifinalist teams Up to 5 bonus points for Finalist teams

✓ SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:

At least one team of two students participates in the Debate tournament event at Fairchild on February 18, 2026 (points are accrued based on how many students participate and their placement).

Maximum four student debaters (two teams of two) and one optional alternate team (two students) can participate in the Debate tournament event. Other students may attend as spectators.

Students and teachers must remain for the duration of the debate to receive points.

Registration form (to be posted in January 2026) due on January 30, 2026.

RESOURCE: Optional Virtual Office Hours with a Debate Expert (Open to Students and Teachers) - Date TBD

On-time debate registration. Late registrations must be okayed by the Challenge team.

Challenge 4: Environmental Debate

Prior Knowledge:

To be successful, students should be familiar with these concepts:

- Best methods to effectively conduct research from reliable resources
- Understand the role of science and public policy in addressing a variety of issues
- Understanding of persuasive speaking styles

Standards/Learning Targets:

Subject	Strand	Standard
Social Studies	Sociology	SS.912.S.7.1 - Identify characteristics of a social problem, as opposed to an individual problem.
		SS.912.S.6.5 - Discuss how social interactions and culture could be affected in the future due to innovations in science and technological change.
		SS.912.S.6.10 - Propose a plan to improve a social structure, and design the means needed to implement the change.
Science	Strategic Thinking & Complex Reasoning	SC.912.L.17.12 - Discuss the political, social, and environmental consequences of sustainable use of land.
		SC.912.L.17.20 - Predict the impact of individuals on environmental systems and examine how human lifestyles affect sustainability.
		SC.912.L.17.17 - Assess the effectiveness of innovative methods of protecting the environment.

Learning Goals/Objectives:

By the end of this Challenge, students will be able to:

- Articulate** an opinion based on reliable research
- Identify** the quality of debate from all participants
- Use** persuasive techniques to secure support for ideas
- Defend** researched positions based on counter points

Differentiation:

We strive to be inclusive of all learners. Please contact us at challenge@fairchildgarden.org if you have questions about accommodations specific to your students' needs.

For more detailed information and resources, please visit the **High School Challenge 4 webpage**.

