



The Game Everyone is Yelling About!

Game Instructions

Setup

- Choose teams and select the judge. Either two or three teams can play, with one or more players on each team. There is only one judge.
- Open the game board. Seat the judge along the side of the game board that has the spots for the three Winner's Tokens. Seat players, grouped according to teams, around the other three sides of the game board
- Position the two boxes of category cards near the judge. Place the Bonus Cards (facedown) and Winner's Tokens on the corresponding spaces on the game board. Have each team choose a podium game piece and place it on *Start*. Give the timer to the judge and have him/her set it for a two-minute countdown. (*See About the Timer.*)
- Give a pencil and a blank sheet from the **SELF-WRITEOUS** pad to each player and to the judge. Have everyone write down one or two topics that they believe will make for an entertaining debate during the game. Separate the sheets along the perforated lines so that there is one topic on each piece of paper. Have the judge collect and shuffle all of the **SELF-WRITEOUS** topics and then place them facedown in a single stack on the table, near the category card boxes. (*See About Debate Categories.*)

Game Play

- The object of **DEBATE THIS!**[®] is to score more debate points than your opponents. During each turn, two teams will either debate one topic for three rounds or (in a **SPEED ROUND**) three different topics for one round each. Each team will be allocated twenty seconds of "talk time" per round, for a total of one minute per team on every turn. Immediately following each round, the judge will award a Winner's Token to the team that, in the judge's opinion, was the most clever, creative, entertaining and, most important, persuasive for that round. At the end of the turn, when all three rounds have been completed, teams will record their scores by moving the appropriate number of forward spaces on the game board. The first team to reach *Finish* wins the game.
- Each debate will involve two teams. A team will have the leadoff position when it is their turn. The team that leads off is

able to choose its position for the debate. The opposing team must then debate from an alternate or opposing viewpoint. The team to the judge's immediate left is Team One, and will lead off in the first debate. When the game is played with two teams, both teams will be involved on every turn, alternating the leadoff position after each turn.

- When the game is played with three teams, the leadoff position will rotate clockwise beginning with Team One leading off against Team Two, followed by Team Two leading off against Team Three and finally with Team Three leading off against Team One. This sequence will be repeated throughout the game.
- At the beginning of each turn, the leadoff team will draw a Bonus Card from the top of the stack. The bonus opportunity on that card is available to either team participating in the debate, but only for that turn. Do not read the Bonus Card aloud or allow the judge to read it. (For reasons of impartiality, the judge should not be made aware of the specific bonus opportunities for an upcoming turn.) After the players on both teams have read the card, place it facedown on the table until the turn has ended.
- For the first turn of the game, and in situations where the leadoff team is still on *Start*, the judge will choose the category to be debated by the teams. For all subsequent turns, the debate category will be determined by the color that corresponds with the leadoff team's position on the game board. In all cases, the judge will pull the next available card from either the appropriate end of a category box or the top of the **SELF-WRITEOUS** stack. (*See About the Judge.*)
- There are two topics on each card for **in THIS CORNER**, **NOTHING PERSONAL** and **FROM THE HIP**, and the judge will choose one of the two topics on the card for the debate. There will only be one topic per card for **SELF-WRITEOUS**; therefore, no decision is required. **SPEED ROUND** has three topics per card, all of which will be debated (for one round of twenty seconds each) during the turn.
- Once the judge has read the topic, the teams will be allowed about one minute to plan their strategy for the debate. For **SPEED ROUNDS**, the judge will read the topic at the beginning





of each round, and teams will have about thirty seconds to prepare for each debate. (*See About Debate Categories.*)

- The judge will control the timer, which will count down from two minutes and beep after every twenty-second segment. The judge will start the timer to begin the countdown and signal the leadoff team to begin the debate. When the timer signals the end of a segment, the team speaking must immediately stop in order to allow its opponent a full twenty-second segment.

- For the **SPEED ROUND**, the judge will stop the timer after each team has had a twenty-second segment to debate the first topic. The judge will then read the second topic on the card, allow the teams about thirty seconds for preparation, and start the timer again for the second round. These steps will be repeated in similar fashion for the final round/topic.

- At the end of each round (after each team has completed a twenty-second segment) the judge will award the Winner's Token to the team who, in the judge's opinion, delivered the most clever, creative, entertaining and, most important, persuasive argument for that round. There is no pause in play at this point. The judge simply slides the token over to the winning team as the timer signals the beginning of the next round. The number on the token signifies the round in which it was awarded. The base value of each token is one point, or may briefly discuss any highlights of the debate.

Scoring

- At the end of each turn, after all three debate rounds are over, teams may record their score on the game board. For each Winner's Token collected in a turn, a team may move forward one space on the game board. In addition, the team that wins the round(s) identified by the Bonus Card may move forward according to the number of additional spaces designated on the card. The Bonus Card is then placed facedown at the bottom of the Bonus Card stack, the tokens are returned to the judge, and a new turn begins. The first team to reach *Finish* wins the game.

About Debate Categories

There are five different categories/formats for the debate topics. Each category is represented by a different color or design, which also corresponds to the colored spaces on the board.

- **IN THIS CORNER** (Gold) defines both sides of the debate.
- **NOTHING PERSONAL** (Blue) always pertains to the players in the game.

- **FROM THE HIP** (Red) has a wide array of open-ended topics.

- **SELF-WRITEOUS** (Green) is your opportunity to personalize **DEBATE THIS!**[®] every time you play the game. Whether it's a current event, an ongoing sports rivalry or a personal "hot button," this is your chance to customize the game to fit your crowd. Feel like diving back into a long-standing feud with someone who just happens to be on the opposing team? Do you have a topic that's sure to light someone's fuse? This is your chance to take that old standby—the one that gets your crowd going every time—off the shelf for another spin. It's wide-open here, so don't hold back.

- **SPEED ROUND** (Podium) cards have three topics (one each of **IN THIS CORNER**, **NOTHING PERSONAL** and **FROM THE HIP**). Each topic will be debated for one round of twenty seconds. The first topic on the card will be round one, the second topic will be round two and the third topic will be round three.

About Debate Strategies

- If your team is leading off, you should determine the position you will take for the debate, the key points that will be argued, and your lead speaker(s). If your team isn't leading off, choose a couple of positions (one as a backup), and then build your arguments.

- The strategies for both teams should include a plan for capturing the bonus opportunity described on the Bonus Card for that turn.

- Use your preparation time wisely. Choose your position quickly and then use the remaining time to build your argument.

- Once the debate has begun, be prepared to adjust your argument on-the-fly. You can win a round by arguing in support of your team's position or by arguing against your opponent's position.

- If you are debating an open-ended topic, and your team performs poorly on one round or it becomes clear that a position or argument is weak, you may alter your position for subsequent rounds. However, the new position must be different than that of your opponents, and it must address the debate topic on the category card. Because of the format topics for **IN THIS CORNER**, teams may not alter positions during a debate. (Some topics in other categories may have the same limitation.) The judge's ruling in this area is final.





- Anybody or everybody on your team can speak when it's your debate segment. But the judge is less likely to hear a cohesive argument if your entire team is attempting to talk over one another.
- This is a team game, and group participation should be an important part of your team's strategy. Don't let one person do all the talking during the debates. The judge will take notice and award Winner's Tokens accordingly.
- You won't score points for silence. When it's your team's turn, somebody say something!

About The Judge

The judge plays a critical role in the game. Actually, it's not a big deal. But it's really fun. And let's be honest, it's a bit of a power trip. (Feel free to wear a robe if that's your thing.) So here's a bit of guidance:

- The judge's decision on a debate topic is final, but you should be open to input from the players.
- When choosing from two topics on a category card, pick the one that fits your crowd better without putting one team at a distinct disadvantage.
- Teams should be allowed a maximum of one minute to develop a debate strategy for a typical three-round debate.
- For **SPEED ROUND**, teams should be allowed a maximum of thirty seconds per topic to develop a debate strategy.
- The Winner's Token should be awarded to the team that presents the most clever, creative, entertaining and, most important, persuasive argument for the round.
- A team may win a round by arguing for its own position or against an opponent's position.
- This is a team game, and group participation should be an important part of your team's strategy. This is not to say that every player must speak on every turn or that teams need to be precise when alternating speakers. Encourage active participation by all players, and give appropriate consideration to this issue when awarding Winner's Tokens.
- Each round should be evaluated on its own merit, and a team's performance or position in one round should not impact your decision in a subsequent round.
- When teams are debating open-ended topics, it's acceptable for a team to change its position after the debate has begun as

long as the new position differs from the opponent's position and it addresses the debate topic on the category card. Because of the format of topics for **IN THIS CORNER**, teams may not alter positions during a debate. (Some topics in other categories may have the same limitation.) The judge's ruling in this area is final.

- Don't let your views on the debate topic influence how you award the tokens. Also, don't let the facts about a certain topic cloud your judgment. Is the argument clever, creative and entertaining? And have you been persuaded?
- Don't abuse your power...too much.

About The Timer

• The timer must be set for a two-minute countdown before the start of the game. To set the timer from zero, press the *Set* (Blue) button and hold it down for five seconds, until the display for minutes begins to flash. Press the *Min/Sec* (small round) button twice (the minute display will read 02'), then press the *Set* button once, which will cause the display for seconds to flash. Last, press the *Set* button once more to complete the process (the display will read 02'00").

- To begin the two-minute countdown, press the *Start/Stop* (Red) button once. The timer will beep every twenty seconds to signal the end of one debate segment/beginning of another.
- After the timer has counted down to zero, it will beep continually. Press the *Start/Stop* button once to reset the timer to two minutes (and stop the beeping).
- To pause the countdown for a **SPEED ROUND**, press the *Start/Stop* button once. (It will not reset.) To resume the countdown, press the *Start/Stop* button again.
- If the two-minute countdown is started before players are ready to begin, press the *Start/Stop* button once to stop the timer, then press the *Set* button once to reset the timer for two minutes.
- To clear the timer (to zero), press the *Set* button twice. To set the timer again, follow the instructions above.

