

Speech & Debate

Miss Curtis: maddisonjcurtis@gmail.com

Welcome to an exciting semester of Speech & Debate! My name is Miss Curtis, and I will be your teacher for this course. I am looking forward to our time together to learn and grow as both people and students. Speaking in front of others and participating in debates can be challenging and, at times, may feel uncomfortable. However, effective communication is one of the most valuable skills a young adult can develop, both personally and professionally. I ask all of you to be willing to step outside of your comfort zone, try new things, and support one another as we develop our communication skills. My hope is that we can create a classroom environment where everyone feels comfortable participating, making mistakes, sharing their ideas, and building confidence in their ability to communicate effectively.

Course Description: Students in Speech & Debate develop the skills necessary to communicate ideas clearly, confidently, and effectively in both formal and informal settings. The course introduces students to the foundations of public speaking and argumentation, including speech organization, audience awareness, persuasion, active listening, rebuttal, and respectful disagreement. Students practice applying these skills through speeches, discussions, debates, and other presentations. Throughout the course, students develop their ability to construct and support arguments, respond thoughtfully to opposing viewpoints, and use effective verbal and nonverbal communication.

Course Goals: Goals of the course will include developing students' confidence and effectiveness as speakers, strengthening their ability to construct and communicate clear arguments, and improving their ability to listen to and respond to different perspectives. Students will also develop skills in organization, persuasion, rebuttal, delivery, and respectful discussion. Students will meet these goals through speeches, debates, discussions, presentations, peer feedback, and various classroom activities.

Units of Study:

1. Foundations of Speech & Debate
2. Body Language & Delivery
3. Application & Performance

Required Materials: Students are expected to bring the following materials to class each day:

- Laptop/Tablet (Please talk to me if you do not have a device so we can make accommodations*)
fully charged
- Notebook paper
- Writing utensil
- Binder or folder for any notes or printed assignments/reading material
- School issued textbook (kept at home)

Grading Policy

Progress report and semester grades will follow the following scale, unless stated otherwise:

A: 93% and above

A-: 89% - 92%

B+: 87% - 88%

B: 83% - 86%

B-: 79% - 82%

C+: 77% - 78%
C: 73% - 76%
C-: 69% - 72%
D+: 65% - 68%
D: 60% - 64%
D-: 55% - 59%
F: 0% - 54%

Absences/Make Up Work/Homework

Students are expected to be in class every day. If you are absent, you are responsible for finding out what you missed, including notes, readings, homework, and other assignments. You may check Jupiter or reach out to me directly via email to discuss missed work. Students will have as many days as they were absent to complete missed work, unless other arrangements have been made.

If you are present in class, homework is expected to be completed by the assigned due date. If there are extenuating circumstances that make an assignment deadline difficult to meet, **you must communicate with me** in advance so that we can create an appropriate action plan. Communication is essential; if I am unaware of a circumstance affecting your ability to complete an assignment, I cannot provide appropriate support, and the assignment may result in a zero.

Office Hours

For quick, clarifying questions, you are encouraged to reach out to me directly via email: maddisonjcurtis@gmail.com. Alternatively, for longer discussions, I am available via Zoom by appointment only. To schedule a Zoom meeting, please email me. I am most often available between 5 and 8pm on weeknights.

Ground Rules/Expectations

- 1) Be RESPECTFUL
- 2) Be HONEST
- 3) PARTICIPATE. This is a team effort and we all need to work together to get the most out of our lessons. Mutual respect will get us far together. On that note, should anything come up, being honest can only benefit the wellbeing of you and of this class. This includes academic integrity.
- 4) Arrive to class on time. You will have one warning, after that, points will be taken from your participation grade each tardy. Continued tardiness will result in a parent/teacher meeting and potential further disciplinary action.
- 5) You are expected to bring all materials necessary for learning, including the right attitude.
- 6) Use school appropriate/professional language in the classroom. We are fostering a healthy learning environment in this classroom and that involves keeping our space positive.
- 7) COMMUNICATE. I highly value communication, and this is a skill that will get you far in life. If there's something I should know, another way I can help you, or just something you want to share, you are always invited to communicate with me.

As a whole - No one has the right to interfere with the learning, safety or well-being of others in our classroom. Every person within the school environment has the right to complete their responsibilities without interference from others. Do what is expected of you and do it to the best of your ability.

Cell Phones & Electronic Device

Cell phones will be collected at the beginning of each class if and when privileges are being abused, at Miss Curtis' discretion. Cell phones may be allowed to be used when your assignment(s) for the day is/are complete and submitted, or when the assignment allows for its use.

Academic Integrity

I expect the work you submit in this class to be yours and for you to be proud of what you turn in! This is part of our honesty expectation. If you need more time on an assignment, talk to me! Don't compromise your academic integrity.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which is not allowed. Copying homework or plagiarizing in any form and from any source will not be tolerated. If you are caught plagiarizing in any form, you will not earn credit for the assignment.

Academic integrity, in the context of **AI use**, means using AI tools ethically, responsibly, and as intended – to *support* your learning, not to bypass it. This implies producing work that is primarily your own, and appropriately acknowledging assistance received from AI. Unattributed use of AI-generated content, over-reliance on AI for your work, or using AI to avoid reading or analysis will be considered violations of our academic integrity policy.

Please sign & date below (digitally or by hand) and return no later than Monday, August 31st.
(In-person or via email). *Do not forget to turn this in with your Syllabus Quiz.*
