

Business, Society & Ethics

Debate #5: This House Believes Walmart Owes Restitution to the Victims and Their Families for the Tazreen Factory Fire and the Rana Plaza Collapse

| Proposition Teams Defending the Motion | | | Opposition Teams Rejecting the Motion | | |
|--|----|----|---------------------------------------|----|----|
| P1 | P4 | P7 | O1 | O4 | O7 |
| P2 | P5 | P8 | O2 | O5 | O8 |
| P3 | P6 | | O3 | O6 | |

Sitting Out:

Background Readings

These readings provide you with a starting point in understanding various arguments connected to the debate's motion.

- Greenhouse & Yardley, "As Walmart Makes Safety Vows, It's Seen as Obstacle to Change" (webpage).
- Greenhouse, "U.S. Retailers Decline to Aid Factory Victims in Bangladesh" (webpage).
- Yardley, with Ali Manik, "After Bangladesh Factory Collapse, Bleak Struggle for Survivors" (webpage).
- Greenhouse, "\$40 Million in Aid Set for Bangladesh Garment Workers" (webpage).
- Yardley, with Ali Manik & Taulés, "Clothing Brands Sidestep Blame for Safety Lapses" (webpage).

This reading is in no way exhaustive. Indeed, I fully expect that you and your team will conduct additional research in order to better equip yourself for debate preparation and the debate position paper.

Debate Preparation Outline

Due: Thursday, April 3rd by 8:00AM via TurnItIn.

Late debate preparation outlines will *not* be accepted unless you have requested and I have granted a *prior* reasonable accommodation.

Only one person on your team needs to submit your outline. At the end of class on the day of the debate, I will randomly select teams whose outlines will be graded. Your team is always free to volunteer to have its graded, however, this must be agreed to by absolute consensus (i.e., if one member does not want to volunteer, your outline will not be graded). Unless I tell you otherwise, each member of your group will receive the same final grade.

Instructions: Your outline should be 1,100–1,200 words in length and conform to the course's "General Technical Requirements for Written Assignments".

Your team's assignment is to prepare an outline of its position and defense. The over-arching goal is to present a reasoned defense of your team's position that would assist you in defending yourself against someone who disagrees. Your team's outline must clearly present the following three items:

1. Justify and defend your team's position,
2. Critique and reject the other team's position, and
3. Present counter-arguments responding to potential critiques of your team's position.

Each part should be about a third of the total outline. In writing this, please assume that your readers are not familiar with the debate's motion—so explain and organize the outline as clearly as possible.

I will leave it to your team to decide how to fairly distribute this work load.

Debate Peer Evaluation

Date: Thursday, April 3rd by 8:00AM via TurnItIn

Late peer evaluations will *not* be accepted unless you have requested and I have granted a *prior* reasonable accommodation.

Each person in the class (not sitting out this debate) must submit a peer evaluation. Failure to submit an evaluation will result in a 0.10 point (i.e., one-tenth letter grade) deduction from your end-of-semester debate preparation outline grade.

Instructions: Your peer evaluations should include the names of your team members and assign each of them a grade following the 5-point scale from page 1 of the syllabus. (You may use up to two decimal places, e.g. 4.55, if that is meaningful to you.) You are free, but not required, to include comments if you feel it necessary to explain your evaluations.

At the end of the semester, I will calculate your average peer evaluation. I will then subtract 4.00 from this average. The result is added to your end-of-semester debate preparation outline grade. So if the result is positive, that *boosts* your grade. But if the result is negative, that *reduces* your grade.

Note: If you are having trouble getting in touch with your team members, please let me know immediately. I will do my best to get you all in contact with each other. Furthermore, if you are experiencing difficulties working with another group member, please let me know immediately. I will do my best to help resolve the situation to everyone's satisfaction. I always prefer solving the problem without penalizing grades.

Please continue ►

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+ In-Class Debate

Date: Thursday, April 3rd.

At the beginning of class this day, I will randomly select one proposition and one opposition team to debate in front of the class. Being unable to debate at that time results in all team members receiving a 0.00 (R).

Format: Each team member must speak exactly once for five minutes. The order of the speeches during the debate will be as follows:

Proposition Team: Opening presentation of the argument supporting the motion.

Opposition Team: Opening presentation of the argument rejecting the motion.

Proposition Team: Exposition of flaws in the other team's argument and why proposition's argument is superior.

Opposition Team: Exposition of flaws in the other team's argument and why opposition's argument is superior.

Proposition Team: Closing summary of proposition's argument and why this persuasively responds to all of the other team's criticisms.

Opposition Team: Closing summary of the opposition's argument and why this persuasively responds to all of the other team's criticisms.

I will leave it to your team to decide when each of its member will speak.

Following the debate, we will have a vote on which team offered the strongest and most compelling argument about the motion. The remainder of time opens the floor to questions and comments by the entire class.

Debate Position Paper

Due: Thursday, April 10th by 12:00PM (noon) via TurnItIn.

Late debate position papers will *not* be accepted unless you have requested and I have granted a *prior* reasonable accommodation.

At the end of class on the day of the debate, I will randomly select students who will be required to do this paper. You are always free to volunteer to do it. You only have to do *one* of these papers during this semester, so once you have done it, you *never* need to do another.

Instructions: Your paper should be 1,100–1,200 words in length and conform to the course's "General Technical Requirements for Written Assignments".

Your assignment is to state a clear thesis of agreement or disagreement with the debate's motion and then provide a reasoned *argument* in support of that position. Please do not provide a list of "possible positions" e.g., "one might say x, or one might say y. . ." Simply state *your* position and defend it. In doing so, be clear about the following four items:

1. The statement of your position or thesis about the debate's motion,
2. The premises or reasons you are using to justify that position,
3. The reasons why these premises are plausible and difficult to deny, and
4. The inferences showing how these premises entail your position.

This is a short paper, so *stay focused*. It should be clear to the reader how your every word, sentence, and paragraph is doing one of these four things.

You are free to draw upon any relevant material, but please cite anything that you use. However, please do not waste space with unnecessary quotation. I am primarily interested in *your* views.

For this paper, you should not write an extensive introduction. Your introduction should only give a brief sketch—in one short paragraph with no more than three or four sentences—of the issue and the position you will defend. Do not summarize your argument here. The purpose of this introduction is to give readers unfamiliar with the issue any relevant background information

for easily understanding the argument you will present in the paper's body. Furthermore, your reader will know immediately the position you will be defending throughout the paper.

The body of the paper should then perform the four tasks stated above. This paper should have *no conclusion*. That is, there should be no concluding paragraph summarizing your paper or explaining any of the consequences that result from accepting your argument; your paper is already short enough so such a summary is not needed.

General Advice: In order to write the position paper, you must address the four items mentioned in the instructions to make your own argument. There is no where else to look, nor is there anyone else to ask, for the right answer. It is up to you to reflect on the position you are willing to defend as the most compelling. Keep in mind that this position may not be the same one your team was selected to defend. Once you are clear in your mind about your own position on the debate's motion, then you can begin to identify the strongest reasons to offer in support of that position. Once you have done all that, you can finally assemble all this into your position paper

Keep in mind, this is an extremely short paper. Do not waste valuable time and space with too much build up, overly extensive explanations, unnecessary side-commentary, arguments for positions unrelated to the topic. I *do* expect you to use examples in order to make your argument clearer, but keep these examples brief and tightly connected to your main argument defending your thesis in response to the topic. In addition, if you are using terminology from class that a normal person would not understand, then be sure to explain what those and any other technical terms mean to your reader.

I encourage you to imagine that your readers are lazy, stupid, and mean. They are *lazy* in that they do not want to figure out what your convoluted sentences are supposed to mean, and they do not want to figure out what the argument is, if you have not already made it obvious. They are *stupid*, so you have to explain everything you say to them in simple, bite-sized pieces. And they are *mean*, so they are not going to read your paper charitably. For example, if something you say admits of more than one interpretation, they will assume you mean the less plausible thing.

Finally, feel free to creatively explore this topic. Even so, while you have freedom in terms of your paper's style and argumentative structure, remember that it is your *argument* that must always clear to your reader. Do not let stylistic elements distract from your paper's primary purpose, which is to provide a reasoned defense of your thesis. Entertaining your reader has extremely low priority.

Collaboration & Academic Integrity

Please be aware that academic integrity demands that each group work on its own in preparing for the debate and that each student work on his or her own in writing the position paper.

That said, everyone remains free to discuss the debate's motion, share related articles and other links, and so on, via Twitter using the course hashtag **#BSE14**. However, if you use anything from another person in your preparation outline or in your position paper, please cite it, e.g., as "From a tweet by @TwitterName" or "From a discussion with Person's Name".

I always encourage you to talk about these issues with your classmates and others. Learning with and from others is great! But I also expect that your team writes its own preparation outline and that you write your own position paper, all while being honest about any assistance you may have received in doing so.