LingoLift

Teacher Guide

Speaking Practice: T-Chart Pair Defend

Speaking is a literacy skill, and one of the most underused. When students say an argument out loud, they're practicing the same moves strong writers make: stating a claim, backing it with reasons, using evidence, and answering the other side.

T-Chart Pair Defend is adapted from Seven Steps to a Language-Rich Interactive Classroom. It gives every student structured time to rehearse their thinking, so by the time they pick up a pencil or sit at the keyboard, they've already built their argument.



How it works:

- **Speaking is rehearsal for writing.** Students say an argument first, so they can write it more clearly and with more detail.
- **Students can practice academic language out loud.** Sentence frames support students in how to make a claim, give a reason, and push back respectfully.
- **Listening and speaking work together.** Partners hear the other side before they respond.
- **Every voice counts.** Pairing gives every student a chance to speak.

How to Run T-Chart Pair Defend

1 Listen & Chart · about 10 min
Play a short debate-style story from LingoLift. As a class, brainstorm reasons for each side and record them on a large T-chart: pros on one side, cons on the other. Model one pro and one con aloud using a sentence frame, so students hear what a strong argument sounds like.

2 Pair Up · 1 min
Put students in pairs. One partner takes the pro side and the other takes the con side. Partner A speaks first while Partner B listens. Then switch.

3 Debate · about 5 min
Partners use the class chart to argue their side. Students newer to English can read reasons directly from the chart. Students ready for more can add their own details and evidence from the story. Before responding, the listener restates their partner's point: "So you're saying ___." Then they give their own argument.

4 Switch · about 5 min
Partners swap sides and argue the opposing view.

5 Write · about 5–10 min
Before writing, students find a new partner and say their final argument in 30 seconds. Then they write it down, word for word if they want, as a short response using the worksheet.



Student Skills

- Stating a clear claim
- Giving reasons and evidence
- Restating a partner's point
- Arguing an opposing view
- Turning spoken arguments into writing

Teacher Tips

- Pick a question with no obvious right answer.
- Let students plan in their home language.
- Keep the class chart up. It doubles as a word bank for the writing step.

Sentence Frames

Claim	I think ___. I believe ___ because ___.
Reason	One reason is ___. The strongest reason is ___.
Evidence	In the story, I heard ___. The speaker said ___, which shows ___.
Restate	You said ___. So your point is ___.
Respond	I disagree because ___. I see why you think that, but ___.

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T-Chart Pair Defend

Name _____ Date _____

TODAY'S QUESTION



Say it first ✓

- ☐ I said my side out loud.
- ☐ I gave a reason.
- ☐ I used evidence from the story.
- ☐ I restated my partner's point.

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T-Chart Pair Defend

Name _____ Date _____

WRITE YOUR SIDE

☐ Yes ☐ No



Tip!

Try stating your point of view like this:

I believe _ because _.
One reason is _. Another reason is _.
Some people think _, but _.

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