History 2111 Honors

Debate guidelines

1) I will give each of you a character to portray in one of the three debates. I will make these assignments and inform you of your character in class. I will also post the list of who is playing each character on my website (your last name only). If you do not wish to have your name posted on my website, please let me know. I will work around that. I will make these assignments this week and have the list ready for you by the beginning of next week.

2) Once you have learned which debate in which you will participate, you will need to do your preliminary research. On my website, you will find an overview of each topic with readings for EACH MEMBER OF THE DEBATE TEAM. You will also find links to the biographies of each character. If you wish to do further research on your character, that is fine. Just make sure you are using good sources created by reputable scholars in each field. It is important that you know your character as well as you can. You are not simply repeating their ideas as yourself. You ARE the character. If their ideas are offensive to you, you are free to start your part of the debate with the standard disclaimer: "The opinions I am about to voice are NOT my opinions, but the opinions of (name of your character)." [Note: This disclaimer is not necessary since everyone in the class should understand the nature of this assignment, but in light of the ease with which people can be misunderstood these days, I will leave the use of this disclaimer open to your discretion.] It is also very important to remember that you are playing this character during a specific moment in time so it is not appropriate to use any future reference in the debates. {For example: if you are playing Alexander Hamilton, it would not be acceptable to refer to your duel with Aaron Burr. Hamilton did not see that coming in 1787!}.

3) Each debate team will need to meet at least twice to prepare for the class presentation. You will need to work out introductions, the order in which each character speaks and rebuttal statements. THIS IS WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO READ ALL THE MATERIAL!! You will need to know your opponents' arguments and anticipate how you will answer each one of their points.
4) **On the day of your debate:** I will open the debate by explaining the overall argument and how it fits into our theme of Central vs. Local Authority. I will then turn the class over to the debate team. Each speaker will introduce himself or herself AS THEIR CHARACTER. Each character will then have 5 minutes to state their main argument. It is not appropriate or acceptable to read quotes from your character's speeches! You are the character. To avoid the temptation to do this, each member of the team is allowed to bring in ONE index card containing the main points your character would argue. Use these cards wisely; they are the only cheat sheets you will have! After each person has spoken, the opponents will have the chance to question on another and sum up their sides' argument.

On the days of the debates, those students who are not participating in the debates will be required to listen carefully to the arguments and will rate the quality of each sides' presentation. I will provide the class with a list of questions to consider as they weigh each presentation. The classes' assessment of the debate will be part of the final grade for the debate. In addition, each student will have his or her assessment of each debate count toward his or her debate grade.

**Assessment**

Your debate grade includes not only your performance in your debate, but your assessment of your classmates' performances in theirs as well. The breakdown is below:

- Overall individual performance: 50%
- Team grade: 25%
- Sheet completion: 15%
- Assessment as audience member: 10%