Name: _____ Date: _____

Debate Evaluation

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Strengths				
Weaknesses				
Improvements				
General Comments				
Overall Conclusion:				

Problem Situation

Text: Milton, John. *Paradise Lost.*New York: Penguin, 2000.

Context: This strategy is meant to be completed before teaching the novel because it references the plot sequence of Book I in which Satan is cast out of heaven and must resolve with his host what to do about their banishment. The following debate scenario is a contemporary parallel of Satan's predicament but requires no knowledge of the novel or characters to complete, making it an ideal introduction to the text. Students should have a wealth of background relating to the scenario which can then be transferred to Milton's work.

Purpose: This strategy taps into students' personal feelings regarding the common novel themes of authority, obedience, and rebellion. Thus it connects to prior knowledge, creates an interest in the story, clarifies meaning, and offers the students a forum to evaluate different perspectives. The process is also aimed to draw out student leadership and presentation skills while encouraging critical thinking and analysis.

Directions: After introducing the novel, display the attached scenario on an overhead transparency or equivalent medium. As a class, read through the scenario and the four options.

Divide the class into four groups. How to divide is up to the teacher. You may allow students to choose their own positions (they get to express what they feel and can be more sincere) or you may assign students to given stances (they get to learn more about recognizing different perspectives and using these to help shape their argument). Each group must choose members to fulfill the following roles:

- **Lead Debater** - Presents the overall argument of the group's position.
- **Question Asker** - Asks the other groups questions about their arguments.
- **Question Answerer** - Must be able to answer questions about team's position.
- **Rebutter** - Responds to the arguments raised by the questions.
- **Closer** - Sums up the group's position, referring to new issues raised in the debate.

You will also need a **moderator** to announce each step of the debate procedure and a **timekeeper** to keep speakers to their allotted time constraints. These may be assigned to members within the groups or to students who, for whatever reason, would prefer not to participate in the debate.

Explain the step-by-step procedures listed below. Once students understand the debate process, allow 10 minutes

to confer as a group and gather a consensus of ideas and arguments. Each student is responsible to make sure all group members participate.

Pass out one copy of the Debate Evaluation sheet to each student and instruct students to write feedback ineach of the appropriate columns throughout the debate. They will turn these in at the lesson's end.

Step by Step Procedures:

1. Moderator announces proposition to be debated.
   For example: "Next up is group three, in favor of compromise."
2. The Moderator must introduce each speaker after the Timekeeper calls time.
3. The Timekeeper must now keep track of the time, letting participants know when they have one minute left to speak and when their time is up.
4. 3 Minutes: Lead Debater for group 1 presents position.
5. 2 Minutes: Question Askers from the other positions asks questions (one at a time and proceding in order) of Question Answerer from the group which has just presented.
6. REPEAT STEPS 1-5 FOR THE REMAINING GROUPS.
7. 2 Minutes: Group 1 Rebutter responds to the arguments raised by the questions.
8. REPEAT STEP 7 FOR THE REMAINING GROUPS.
9. 3 Minutes: Group 1 Closer sums up position, referring to new issues raised in the debate.
10. REPEAT STEP 9 FOR THE REMAINING GROUPS.
11. By voting, decide as a class which argument is most rational

Before beginning the debate, read the tips for debate as a class and provide examples of positive and effective behaviors vs. accusatory and less effective ones. Invite the moderator to begin the debate.

Assessment: Monitor student participation during group consensus and throughout the debate. Give a grade on a scale of 0-5 for participation. Combine this with a score of 0-10 based on completion of the Debate Evaluation form. The teacher may choose to reflect with the class using questions like, "Which argument techniques went well and which did not?" "How could this argument be improved?" "What would you change if you could do it again?" or have the students write a one paragraph reflection detailing one thing they learned and how they might use it to talk to their parents or another figure.

Scenario:

Peter Parker recently turned 18 and graduated high school. The upcoming weekend, to celebrate his new status as an independent adult, he plans to meet up with his friends for pizza and then to spend the whole night at a friend's party. However, on his way out the door his parents remind him that his grandparents drove into town and want to spend some time together with him. Rather than miss out on the party for a boring evening looking at photo albums, Peter tells his parents no . . . and gets grounded.

Now, stuck in his room, Peter needs to make a choice:

1) Obey his parents and accept that they rule over him. Peter will apologize and spend the evening at home with his family. After all, parents always know best.

2) Rebel against his parents and go to the party anyway. Even if peter gets in trouble he won't back down. He's an adult and shouldn't be treated like this.

3) Compromise: maybe Peter is being a little selfish, but he has rights too. He might be able to talk his parents into spending an hour or two at home and then going to the party.

4) Make the most of being grounded. Peter has stuff to do in his room, he can just ride the evening out by himself. It's all a matter of attitude so it doesn't matter where he is or what he's doing so long as he's happy.

Tips for the debate process:

- Avoid terms like **always** or **never**.
- You may say that another person's idea has a mistake, but you can't call another person wrong.
- To maximize your time, don't disagree with the obvious or argue over minor details (you don't need to win every battle, your goal is to win the war).
- Avoid exaggeration and rely on facts and data as much as possible. If you are only giving an opinion, admit to it.
- Be respectful: avoid bickering and quarreling. Be kind to your classmates. Watch your tone. Keep perspective. It's just a debate and winning it isn't worth losing friends.