Name: _____ Date: _____

Index Cards in the Wrong Order

Circle group

Teodoro had spent a week writing his debate speech on index cards. Each card had one argument in blue ink. The topic was whether schools should start later in the morning. He had the side in favor. That suited him, because he was almost never awake before eight.

In the room for the first round, three judges sat in the back with clipboards. Teodoro stood up and said a confident hello. Then his elbow hit the podium. The cards slid off and scattered on the floor.

For a long moment, no one spoke. Teodoro felt his neck turn hot. He could pick up the cards and sort them while everyone watched. Or he could go on with no notes. Neither choice seemed good.

Then he remembered what his coach, Ms. Brandt, had said. "Cards are a crutch. You know the argument. The card is only a reminder."

He took a breath. "Let me talk to you about sleep." With no notes, he explained that teenagers fall asleep later at night. An early alarm cuts into rest they need. He told them about yawning faces in first period. He did not read from paper. He just spoke and looked at each judge.

When he finished, his opponent stood up and attacked one point. Teodoro answered right away, because he understood his argument.

He lost by a small margin. But one judge wrote on her ballot, "Best recovery of the day." Teodoro kept that slip of paper. He never used index cards again.

Questions

1. What topic did Teodoro argue?

_____

_____

2. What happened to his cards at the start?

_____

_____

3. What did Ms. Brandt say about cards?

_____

_____

4. How did the round end?

_____

_____

5. Why could Teodoro answer his opponent right away?

_____

_____

6. Why did Teodoro keep the judge's slip of paper?

_____

_____

Words to know

podium: a small stand a speaker uses to hold notes
crutch: something you lean on too much instead of using your own strength
margin: the amount by which one side wins or loses
ballot: a paper used to record a vote or score

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Index Cards in the Wrong Order

Triangle group

Teodoro had spent a week writing his debate speech on index cards, and each card had one argument printed neatly in blue ink. The topic was whether schools should start later in the morning. He had been assigned the side in favor, which suited him fine, since he was almost never awake before eight.

In the classroom where the first round took place, three judges sat in the back with clipboards. Teodoro stood, cleared his throat, and began with a confident greeting, but then his elbow bumped the podium. The cards slid off in a papery waterfall and scattered across the floor. For a long moment nobody spoke. Teodoro felt heat climb his neck, because he could either gather the cards and sort them while everyone watched or carry on with nothing, and neither choice seemed good.

Then he remembered something his coach, Ms. Brandt, had told him, that cards are a crutch, that he already knew the argument, and that the card is only a reminder. He took a breath and began to talk about sleep. Without any notes, he explained that teenagers naturally fall asleep later at night, so an early alarm cuts into rest they actually need, and he described the yawning faces in first period and the way attention fades. He did not recite; he simply spoke, looking at each judge in turn.

When he finished, his opponent rose and attacked one of his points. Teodoro, free of paper, answered immediately, because he understood his argument rather than just reading it. He lost the round by a narrow margin. But one judge wrote on her ballot, "Best recovery of the day." Teodoro kept that slip of paper. He never used index cards again.

Questions

1. What topic did Teodoro have to argue?

_____

_____

2. What happened to his cards at the start of the speech?

_____

_____

3. What did Ms. Brandt tell him about cards?

_____

_____

4. What was the outcome of the round?

_____

_____

5. Why was Teodoro able to answer his opponent right away?

_____

_____

6. Why did Teodoro keep the judge's slip of paper?

_____

_____

Words to know

podium: a small stand a speaker uses to hold notes
crutch: something you lean on too much instead of using your own strength
recite: to say something from memory word for word
margin: the amount by which one side wins or loses
ballot: a paper used to record a vote or score

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Index Cards in the Wrong Order

Square group

Teodoro had spent a week writing his debate speech on index cards, and each card had one argument printed neatly in blue ink. The topic was whether schools should start later in the morning. He had been assigned the side in favor, which suited him perfectly sound, since he was almost never awake before eight.

In the classroom where the first round took place, three judges sat in the back with clipboards, and Teodoro stood, cleared his throat, and began with a confident greeting, but then his elbow bumped the podium. The cards slid off in a papery waterfall and scattered across the floor. For a long moment nobody spoke. Teodoro felt heat climb his neck, because he could either gather the cards and sort them while everyone watched or carry on with nothing, and neither choice seemed good.

Then he remembered something his coach, Ms. Brandt, had told him, that cards are a crutch, that he already knew the argument, and that the card is only a reminder. He took a breath and began to talk about sleep. Without any notes, he explained that teenagers naturally fall asleep later at night, so an early alarm cuts into rest they actually need, and he described the yawning faces in first period and the way attention fades, and he did not recite; he merely spoke, looking at each judge in turn.

When he finished, his opponent rose and attacked one of his points. Teodoro, free of paper, answered immediately, because he understood his argument rather than just reading it. He lost the round by a narrow margin, but one judge wrote on her ballot, "Best recovery of the day." Teodoro kept that slip of paper. He never used index cards again.

Questions

1. What topic was Teodoro assigned to defend?

_____

_____

2. What happened to his cards at the beginning of the speech?

_____

_____

3. What had Ms. Brandt told him about cards?

_____

_____

4. What was the result of the round?

_____

_____

5. Why was Teodoro able to respond to his opponent so quickly?

_____

_____

6. Why did Teodoro hold on to the judge's slip of paper?

_____

_____

Words to know

podium: a small stand a speaker uses to hold notes
crutch: something you lean on too much instead of using your own strength
recite: to say something from memory word for word
margin: the amount by which one side wins or loses
ballot: a paper used to record a vote or score

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Index Cards in the Wrong Order

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Index Cards in the Wrong Order

Easier · 251 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 3.5

1. That schools should start later in the morning.
2. His elbow hit the podium and the cards fell on the floor.
3. They are only a crutch and a reminder, since he knows the argument.
4. He lost by a small margin.
5. He understood his argument and was not just reading it.
6. It praised his recovery, so it showed he did well in a hard moment.

Triangle: Index Cards in the Wrong Order

This passage · 287 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.7

1. That schools should start later in the morning.
2. His elbow bumped the podium and the cards scattered on the floor.
3. They are only a crutch and a reminder, because he already knows the argument.
4. He lost by a narrow margin.
5. He understood his argument instead of just reading it from paper.
6. It praised his recovery, showing that he succeeded even in a hard moment.

Square: Index Cards in the Wrong Order

Harder · 290 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 9

1. That schools should start later in the morning.
2. His elbow struck the podium and the cards scattered across the floor.
3. They are only a crutch and a reminder, because he already knows the argument.
4. He lost by a narrow margin.
5. He truly understood his argument instead of just reading it.
6. It praised his recovery, proving he could succeed even in a difficult moment.