

## **Pencil Drills**

**Goal of Exercise:** Clear and precise articulation.

**Description:** Have each student find a thin pen or pencil. The student will place the pencil/pen in his/her mouth sideways (similar to a horse's bit). Once the pencil is firmly between the teeth, the student should begin speaking as clearly as possible.

The student can speak off the cuff, or they can read something aloud. Both will achieve the purpose of this exercise.

**Teacher's Note:** This can be practiced in or out of class. Students who take the initiative to practice at home will have better articulation in the long run.

When a pencil/pen is in one's mouth, it makes it difficult to speak. This obstacle can be overcome by going slow and taking care to pronounce each and every word. The student's goal is to be perfectly understandable even with the hindrance of a pencil. Once the pencil is removed after a time of practice, the student will notice a huge improvement in their ability to articulate words without slurring or being misunderstood.

This is an exercise that should be repeated often. Even seasoned debaters will find benefit in doing their pencil drills at tournaments before each round. Pencil drills for debaters are a way to warm up the mouth – the same way a runner might stretch before a race.

