

Debating the Power of Words Answer Key

Since these are discussion prompts, answers will vary, but here is guidance on what strong responses should include:

Prompt 1

- *For:* Persuasive speech can simply highlight truth in a compelling way.
- *Against:* Persuasion always has an agenda; it shapes how others think.
- *Strong Position:* A student should recognize the fine line between persuasion and manipulation.

Prompt 2

- *For:* Listeners must be active; gullibility enables abuse.
- *Against:* Primary blame rests on speakers who distort truth.
- *Strong Position:* Students should see responsibility as shared.

Prompt 3

- *For:* Euphemisms can soften trauma and ease communication.
- *Against:* They obscure reality and mislead judgment.
- *Strong Position:* Recognizing context matters—sometimes gentle, sometimes deceptive.

Prompt 4

- *For:* Propaganda might rally people against injustice or motivate unity.
- *Against:* Even for a “good cause,” it undermines trust in truth.
- *Strong Position:* Pieper would argue propaganda is inherently corrupting.

Prompt 5

- *For:* A free society requires honest words; once corrupted, freedom erodes.
- *Against:* Institutions may still uphold checks on power even with weakened language.
- *Strong Position:* Pieper insists corrupted language inevitably leads to corrupted power.