Document 1: Student Classroom Debate Framework

Name: _____
Date: _____
Class Period: _____

⚖️ Classroom Debate Guide: Frontier Market vs. Collective Survival

Inspired by the Crisis of De Smet in *The Long Winter*

📌 The Debate Proposition

"Resolved: In an extreme emergency, individual property rights and free-market pricing must be suspended to guarantee equal rationing and community survival."

👥 The Debate Teams & Core Philosophies

Team A: The Free Market & Individual Liberty (The Storekeeper's Stance)

- **Core Philosophy:** Individuals have a fundamental right to own property, take business risks, and set their own prices based on supply and demand. If a merchant risks their own money to store food, they own that food. Coercing a storekeeper to lower prices or seize property destroys the legal foundation of a free society. Higher prices naturally prevent hoarding because people buy only what they absolutely need.
- **Historical Anchor:** Mr. Loftus purchasing wheat at his own risk and setting a high price ($3.00/bushel) when the town faced starvation.

Team B: The Collective Good & Civic Duty (The Townsfolk's Stance)

- **Core Philosophy:** The right to life and community survival overrides private financial profit. When a total blockade occurs and no outside help is coming, treating food as a standard business commodity allows the wealthy to survive while the poor starve. True communities operate on shared sacrifice; letting a single merchant profit off a public disaster shatters the civic trust needed to keep order.
- **Historical Anchor:** Charles Ingalls, the town leaders, and the angry crowd of pioneers confronting the storekeeper to demand a fair, universal price.

📝 Preparation Worksheet: Building Your Argument

Directions: Regardless of which team you are assigned to, you must understand both sides of the economic argument. Fill out this preparation worksheet before the debate begins.

1. **Construct Your Primary Point:** State the strongest argument for your assigned side. Use a specific historical event or plot point from *The Long Winter* to support your reasoning.

---

2. **Anticipate the Counter-Argument:** What is the strongest point the opposing team will make against your position?

---

3. **Formulate a Rebuttal:** How will your team answer that counter-argument? (Think about the family rules of **FIX**—*First apologize/acknowledge their point, Improve your argument with better evidence, and Examine the long-term impact on the community*).

⏱️ Debate Format & Structural Procedures

To maintain an orderly, professional, and respectful debate, both teams must strictly adhere to the following timing format:

1. **Constructive Speeches (3 minutes each):** Team A and Team B present their core arguments using evidence from the book.
2. **Team Caucus (2 minutes):** Both teams pause silently to draft rebuttals based on notes taken during the opening speeches.
3. **Rebuttal Round (2 minutes each):** Each team directly answers the points made by their opponents, pointing out logical flaws.
4. **Closing Statements (1 minute each):** A final summary of why each team's economic philosophy preserves human dignity best.

🔑 Teacher Facilitation, Moderation, & Grading Guide

For The Long Winter Economic Debate Lab

💡 Suggested Moderation Prompts (To Move the Debate Forward)

If the student discussion stalls or gets caught on repetitive plot loops, use these targeted ethical prompts to deepen their structural analysis:

- *For Team A (Free Market):* "If a merchant is forced to sell their goods at a low price fixed by the government, what incentive do they have to risk their own money to stock extra food before the next disaster hits?"
- *For Team B (Collective Survival):* "If the town seizes control of private stores during a freeze, where does the line stop? Can the town force you to give up your blankets, or order you to move strangers into your personal home to share body heat?"

📐 Debate Performance Rubric (10-Point Scale)

Evaluation Criteria	Highly Proficient (3 Points)	Developing (2 Points)	Emerging (1 Point)
Evidence & Textual Grounding	Arguments are deeply rooted in the historical events of *The Long Winter*. Accurately uses terms like *finite stock, price gouging,* and *rationing*.	References general themes of starvation or cold from the novel, but lacks specific character actions or accurate economic vocabulary.	Arguments are purely emotional, lacking historical context or reference to the text.
Rebuttal & Listening Agility	Directly addresses specific points made by the opposing team. Modifies arguments dynamically using logical reasoning.	Presents pre-written notes during the rebuttal round without clearly acknowledging the exact points the opponents raised.	Repeats the original constructive speech points without engaging the opposing team's arguments.
Civic Civility & Protocol	Follows structural timing rules perfectly. Speaks with an objective, respectful, and professional tone toward opponents.	Stays mostly within the rules, but occasionally interrupts or speaks out of turn during the opponent's formal time block.	Disregards timing constraints, uses argumentative language, or bickers directly with peers.

(Note: 1 point is automatically awarded for completing the written preparation worksheet to reach the 10-point cap.)