



Debate

Face-off





Face-off

Activity summary

In this in-class debate, groups of students explore two opposing ideas. They are required to do research to learn more about their topic and to prepare arguments in support of their position before taking part.

Duration

3 x 50 minutes

Cycle-specific competencies

Cycle 2 – English Language Arts

- Uses language/talk to communicate and to learn.
- Reads and listens to written, spoken and media texts.

Cycle 2 – Financial Education

Financial issue – Consuming goods and services

1. Consumption

- b. Indicates some of the reasons why consumer habits may change (e.g., socioeconomic context, new technologies, peer pressure, personal values)

Cycle 2 – Contemporary World

1. Creation and distribution of wealth 1.1 Creation of wealth

- a. Indicates some wealth creation factors (e.g., exploitation of natural resources, business productivity, public investments, labour force skills)
- c. Indicates measures implemented by states to regulate the exploitation of natural resources (e.g., adoption of resource-use, preservation and restoration policies, imposition of sanctions)
- d. Indicates factors that limit wealth creation (e.g., scarcity of natural, human and financial resources, weak transportation and communication infrastructure, inadequate labour force training, limited access to energy sources)

Objectives

- Make students more aware of energy efficiency and the importance of saving energy
- Expand students' knowledge of geography, history and economics
- Encourage the acquisition of debating skills
- Teach students to develop a research methodology
- Have students think about a topical subject and take a position



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Preparation

Encourage students to think seriously about the issue by explaining the following:

In life, not everything is black or white. There are many grey areas that call for a more nuanced perspective. Sometimes we think we hold the absolute truth on a subject, but when we talk with other people, our point of view may become more nuanced or even change radically. That's why it's important to do your homework and prepare your arguments, but most of all, to listen to what other people have to say. You never know: you might be surprised!

Material

A computer or other device with Internet access

Introduction

There are two sides to every story. Together, we're going to look at an electricity-related issue that divides society and have some opposing points of view face off in a class debate that could challenge some of your own preconceptions. You will have to prepare your arguments while keeping an open mind. Your goal is to avoid relying on opinions and beliefs and to base your arguments on substantiated data. Everyone has a role to play in this public debate!

Here are the debate topics:

- Opting for energy efficiency vs. raising electricity rates
- Repairing defective devices vs. replacing them with energy-efficient models
- Putting up Christmas lights vs. not putting them up
- Installing home automation (automatic control systems) vs. prioritizing responsible behaviors (manual controls)



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Instructions

- Introduce the two opposing groups to the students.
- Divide the class into teams of four and assign each one a topic to debate.
- Give the students time to do their online research and develop their arguments.
- Educate students about the importance of using reliable sources.

Follow-up

All the positions facing off are defensible. Review the arguments put forward and try to identify the best solution for society as part of a class discussion.

To encourage follow-up, ask the students to answer the following questions as homework, or you can choose to continue the discussion in the classroom.

1. What argument did you have trouble defending?
2. Which of the other team's arguments caused you to question your own position the most?
3. What argument did you agree with, even if you were in the opposing team?
4. Did you learn anything new?
5. Even if you had a different point of view to defend in the debate, what is your own opinion?
Did you "change sides," or do you still believe your arguments were the strongest? Why?

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