



“Hot Topics” Debate

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Language Arts
Grades 9-12



Introduction

Students will participate in debates regarding various topics that are relevant to them. Students will conduct research independently and practice developing arguments for or against their given topics with peers.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL9-10.1B](#) - Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL9-10.1D](#) - Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
- [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL9-10.4](#) - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Materials Needed

- Access to internet/computers/laptops (research)
- Wifi and presentation software or websites
- Pre-made For/Against spinners
- Pre-made “Hot Topic” cards
- Timers

Procedure

1. Prior to the lesson it will be important to decide what your hot topics will be for the students. You may even allow the students to help you by providing a list of hot topics that they feel strongly about. This could be a range of topics from entertainment, sports, education, social media, or other topics. The key is that the topics are relevant to the students and that the topics have relevant research that supports and opposes them.
2. Allow the students a moment to conduct research on the various topics that you have selected as “hot topics.” (Depending on the amount of time allotted for this lesson, you may also allow this to occur prior.)

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3. The students should work in groups of 3-4. In the group there should be one student who will debate as “for,” another student to debate as “against,” and a third student to serve as a scorekeeper/moderator. If you have groups of four, then you may have a scorekeeper and a moderator as two separate roles.
4. The students should come to their groups with a For/Against spinner, a timer and the Hot Topic cards deck that lists each hot topic on a separate card.
5. The moderator will chose a card from the deck and place it for all to see.
6. One of the debating students will spin the spinner to see if it lands on For or Against. The spinner will decide on which side the students will be required to argue.
7. The student that serves as the scorekeeper will set the timer for 30 seconds. Each person will have 30 seconds to debate their side. The scorekeeper will tally each time a person effectively articulates their points of evidence to support their perspective.
8. After the topic has been debated, the students will switch roles in the group and repeat steps 5-7 until all topics in the deck have been debated.

Evaluation

You may assign an exit ticket related to one of the hot topics or you may use an observation rubric for evaluation of this lesson. It is advised to review the rubric with the students prior to starting the lesson activity.