



ACTIVITY 2 GUIDED DEBATE

2A

SPEED DEBATE

Teacher displays a statement to the class relating to the topic chosen.

The statements should be easily understood, but should be selected on the basis that they will invite a degree of disagreement amongst the class e.g. 'War is never acceptable' or 'The government should not be providing aid to other countries when we need the money here'

Teacher asks students to reflect on the statement and to write down on their post-it a number between 1 and 5 based on this scale:

1	'Agree strongly'
2	'Agree'
3	'Not sure'
4	'Disagree'
5	'Disagree strongly'

At this point, the teacher asks the students to show their numbers to each other, to find someone with a different number to them (preferably as different as possible) and to join that person in a pair. The pair then have 5 minutes to discuss why they chose the number they did for the statement.

After this exchange, the teacher takes brief feedback and asks if anyone would change their number and why.

2B

WALKING DEBATE

Make 3 large signs: AGREE; DISAGREE; NOT SURE.

Place the Agree and Disagree signs at opposite ends of the room, with the NOT SURE sign in the middle, as if along an imaginary line.

Read out one at a time some statements for discussion already prepared about the topic chosen, and ask the students to stand nearest the sign that reflects their opinion on the topic.

Emphasise that it is okay to stay in the middle, listen to the debate and then move according as their opinion is formed.

When students have taken a position ask them to say why they have taken that position.

Encourage dialogue /debate among students to persuade those who don't share their opinion to change sides.

Don't underestimate the importance of a good statement – one that is open ended and will give an opportunity for a variety of opinions. Statements should evoke a range of responses and interpretation.

OPINION CARDS

2C

Create a long line in the ground using tape or twine.
Put at one end of the line a paper with "AGREE" and one with "DISAGREE" at the other end.
Divide the class in groups of 4 or 5 components and give to each group a set of opinion cards already prepared with different positions and views about a certain topic.
Each person in the group picks a card and reads it out.
The person then places his/her card down on the line.
The other members of the group say whether they agree with the position where the card lies or think it should be moved, and give their reason.
As soon as the group have finalised, the other students can intervene, expressing their opinion about what happened, if they agreed or not.

SPECTRUM DEBATE

2D

Present the two opposing positions to the class, being careful to ensure that they are equally balanced i.e. that one is not obviously more justifiable than the other.
Using the front of the classroom or other appropriate space, lay a piece of string on the floor
to represent the spectrum of opinions which lie between the two views.
Give each student a few minutes to consider the two views and then to stand along the spectrum in a position which reflects their views.
When they are all in position, ask them to talk to the students nearest to them (maximum 3 students in a group) and explain why they are standing there.
Then, provided there is a reasonable spread of opinion, ask the students to identify someone who is somewhere on the other half of the spectrum i.e. holds a different opinion to them, and to discuss in groups of 2 or 3 why they hold their positions.
Finally ask the students to regroup according to where they now stand after their discussions.
This activity allows students to look at a spectrum of views, within the class, on issues that can be viewed from strongly opposing but justifiable positions, for example, views on imprisonment versus restorative justice for people who have committed a crime.

OXFORD-STYLE DEBATE

Students are divided into the following three groups: 1. Party in favour; 2. Party against; 3. Voting audience (the majority of students are members of this group).

The teacher will inform that students becoming members of one of the parties will be required to give a short speech.

Each party is given 10 minutes to prepare the first speech of just 3 minutes, defending its position in few points.

The debate can now begin: one 3-minute speech per party – one speaker only - is given to the audience.

The parties make notes of the position of the opposite party in order to prepare the contro-speech. The audience is asked to vote, using the voting paddles (thumb up and thumb down). The teacher makes a note of the results.

Taking into consideration the first phase of the debate, each party is given another 10 minutes to prepare a longest speech of minimum 5 and maximum 8 minutes, arguing in deep its position.

The second phase of the debate takes place: one 5/8-minute speech per party – one speaker only - is given to the audience.

The audience can ask from 1 to 3 questions to each party, to clarify some points. The party can decide to answer all the questions of one or two or none of them.

The audience is asked to express its final vote using the voting paddles (thumb up and thumb down). The winner of the debate needs to hold the majority of votes.

2E